

AGRICULTURE & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN



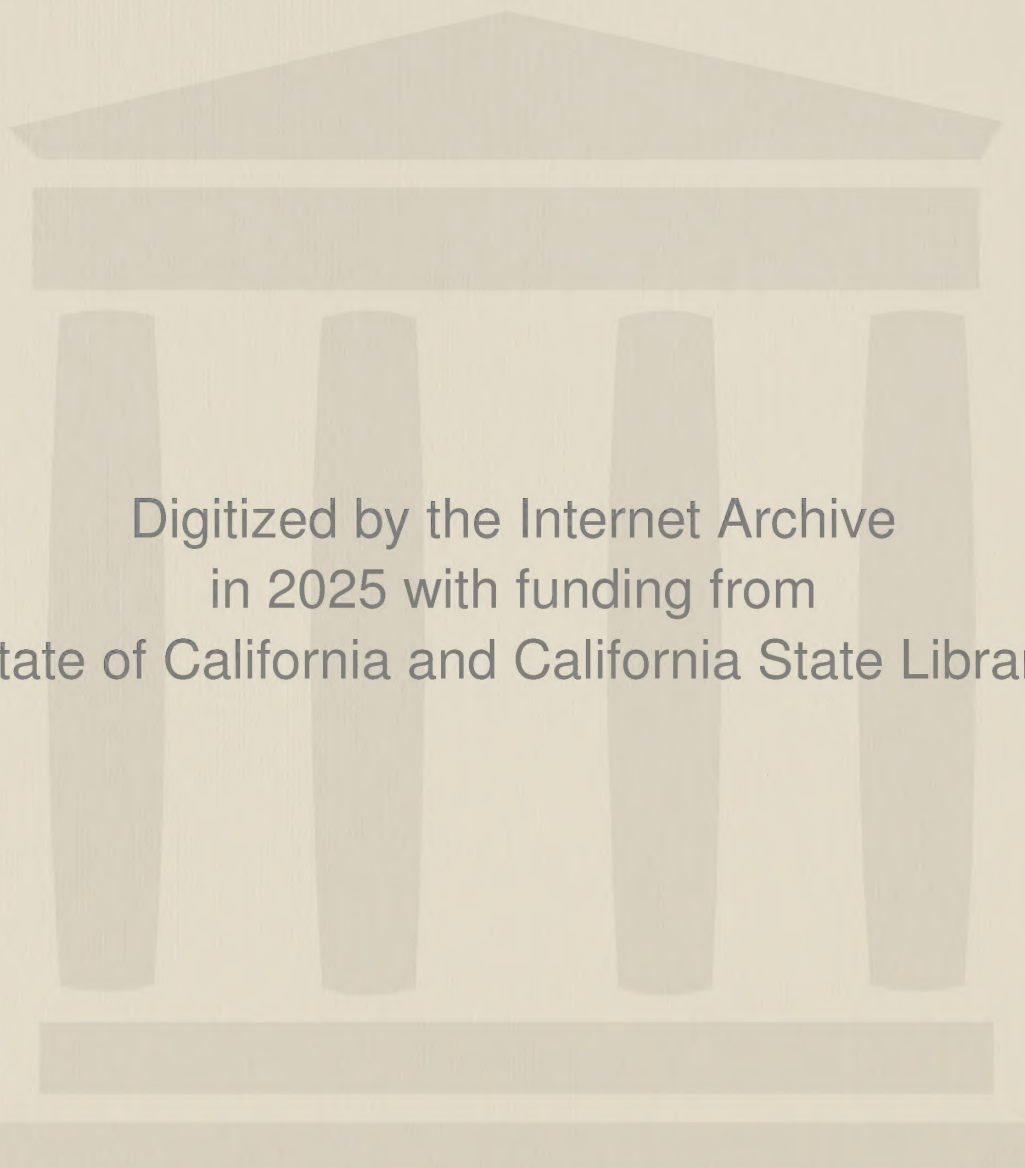
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April 14, 1994 (Revised April 26, 1994)

TO: Members, County Planning Commission
Interested Parties

FROM: Alex Hinds, Director, Planning and Building Department

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Draft Agriculture and Open Space Element

The public hearing draft of the proposed Agriculture and Open Space Element is now available for public review and comment.

The proposed plan has been rewritten based on the public comments received since the release of a public review draft plan in the fall of 1992. As a result of those comments, the portions of the plan dealing with agriculture and open space resources have been modified extensively. Policies and implementation measures are recommended to sustain and enhance the valuable agriculture and open space resources of the county.

This hearing draft plan has been reviewed by the county Environmental Coordinator for possible environmental effects. After an environmental determination is made, the plan will be considered in advertised public hearings held by the County Planning Commission. A precise hearing schedule will be advertised before the hearings begin. Those hearing are expected to begin in late May and extend into the summer of 1994. The Planning Commission's recommendations will then be forwarded to the County Board of Supervisors for another series of advertised public hearings before adoption of the Agriculture and Open Space Element.

We invite you to review this proposed plan. Comments may be submitted to our office at the address noted at the bottom of this page, as well as at the upcoming public hearings.

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PREFACE

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES FACING AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE? HOW CAN THEY BE ADDRESSED? HOW WILL AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES BE PROTECTED?

Agriculture is one of the county's key industries. In 1992, agriculture contributed about \$825,000,000 to the county's economy. Maintaining the health of the agricultural industry in this county is vital to our economy and to our ability to help feed ourselves, the nation and the world. Maintaining a healthy agricultural industry is also essential in order to preserve our rural and agricultural character and heritage.

At first look, it may not seem that there are many issues regarding the protection of agricultural land in this county. After all, approximately 761,000 acres of land are under land conservation contracts -- more than 50 percent of the agricultural land in the county.

There are some existing general plan policies which are intended to protect lands for agricultural production and direct intensive development to urban areas. For example, the revisions to the Land Use Element (LUE) of the general plan and the accompanying Land Use Ordinance (LUO) adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1980 established county policy as to which lands would be urbanized. Village and urban reserve lines defined long-term edges between urban development and the surrounding countryside. The Agriculture category (zone) was applied to all lands within agricultural preserves and to other lands deemed suitable for agriculture. Criteria in the LUO for subdividing agricultural lands were based on existing agricultural uses or the quality of the soils on a property.

Those LUE and LUO policies do not currently appear to be sufficient to protect agricultural lands. The Farm Bureau, Agricultural Commissioner and various community groups have expressed concern that existing county policies do not adequately protect agricultural land and the agricultural industry. It has become increasingly difficult for the county to adequately respond to the needs of the agricultural community.

There is continuing pressure to amend the LUE to convert lands included in the Agriculture land use category to the Residential Rural and Suburban categories, particularly at the edges of urban areas. Rural areas are being subdivided as allowed by the LUE/LUO into sizes that are being questioned in terms of the ability of the properties to remain viable agricultural units.

Other problems are created when antiquated, small-lot subdivisions that underlie rural and agricultural areas are sold as individual lots and developed as rural homesites in areas without adequate public services, especially when they are surrounded by agricultural operations. Residential development in agricultural areas increases conflicts between rural residents and agricultural operations. This can create problems for farmers and ranchers who are continuing

routine agricultural practices that produce noise, dust or other annoyances for non-agricultural residents.

Even though much of the county's agricultural land is subject of land conservation contracts, many of the older contracts may not adequately protect agricultural land. The original Edna Valley, Nipomo Valley and Estrella agricultural preserves, and part of the Shandon preserve have a minimum parcel size of 40-acres. The original Adelaide agricultural preserve has a minimum parcel size of 80-acres. Those parcel sizes may be too small for the properties to sustain long-term agriculture. In fact, much of the land in those preserves would not require a 160 or 320-acre minimum parcel size based on dry farm or grazing use and soil capability. Moreover, early contracts do not prohibit separate sale of existing parcels of record that are smaller than the agricultural preserve minimum parcel sizes. The result could be the sale of individually-owned parcels in agricultural areas which are too small for sustained, long-term agriculture and which will be used primarily for residential purposes.

In addition to such problems, farmers and ranchers have been adversely affected by increasing costs for land, energy, and water, as well as ever higher costs for borrowing money to finance agricultural operations. A wider variety of crops has been brought into production in the county, but the financial return to the farmers and ranchers has declined. Approximately 100,00 acres of land have also been removed from production as part of the federal conservation reserve program.

The preceding trends and problems may cause the county's agricultural land base to be diminished, its urban areas to sprawl into the country side and its best agricultural lands to be lost. As a result, a major sector of the county's economy could be seriously weakened.

In contrast, effectively protecting agriculture provides significant benefits as a productive use of land which otherwise would either lie vacant, serve as sites for scattered residential use or serve only as a medium for speculative investment. By maintaining land in agriculture, the county keeps its future options open and gains productive use of land that requires a minimum level of county services.

Clearly, there is no single solution to such a wide range of problems and issues. Nor are the solutions only local ones. Many problems associated with agriculture may only be resolved through policies at the state or national level. However, the county should define its own agricultural land use policies in order to protect agricultural land resources.

Preparation of this plan is the vehicle the Board of Supervisors has chosen to address the issues facing agriculture and to define the county's agricultural land use policies.

The main agricultural goals of this plan are to:

1. Maintain the county's agricultural land base.

- 2. Establish criteria for when it is appropriate to convert from Agriculture to other land use designations.**
- 3. Provide incentives to landowners to maintain land in productive agricultural uses.**
- 4. Maintain and strengthen the county's agricultural preserve program.**

This plan addresses agricultural resources and open space resources in separate sections. However, it should be recognized that agriculture is also one component of open space land, as defined in the State Government Code sections regarding the open space element. Like agriculture, recreation and tourism also contribute substantially to the local economy. For 1990-91, it has been estimated that recreation and tourism contributed approximately \$600,000,000 to the San Luis Obispo County economy. Thus, the open space element deals with all lands and land use categories -- including agricultural lands -- that may have open space features which are worthy of special protection and that contribute to the recreation and tourism industries.

Open space features include sensitive plant and animal habitat and other areas of ecological importance, visually unique or outstanding features of the landscape, historically significant areas, archaeologically sensitive areas, natural hazard areas important to public health and safety, and recreation areas. The county supports protection, restoration and preservation of significant open space features as an irreplaceable resource for enjoyment by future generations. This is necessary in order to enjoy scenic beauty and recreation, discourage premature and unnecessary conversion of open space to urban uses, maintain public health and safety, and maintain the economy.

As the county's population increases, more pressure is created to develop lands that may have open space value. At the same time, protection of the county's open space resources becomes more important as the population increases and becomes more urban.

This plan establishes goals, policies and implementation measures intended to protect the county's open space resources in the long-term in both rural and urban areas.

The major open space goals of this plan are to:

- 1. Preserve, protect, enhance, and sustain areas with open space resources that include recreation areas, ecosystems and environmentally sensitive resources, archaeological, cultural and historic resources, scenic areas, and hazard areas that help define the rural character of the county.**
- 2. Manage public open space lands to reflect the highest concern for preserving and sustaining open space features.**
- 3. Closely coordinate with the various public agencies involved in open space preservation and management.**

4. **Promote maximum cooperation between the county and private individuals and organizations with regard to open space preservation and management.**
5. **Prevent urban sprawl by maintaining a hard edge between urban/village and rural areas and by establishing and maintaining permanent separations between communities.**
6. **Discourage premature, unnecessary conversion of agricultural, rural and open space lands.**

The primary method proposed to protect open space resources is to identify those resources and apply appropriate policies and implementation measures to them. This plan also proposes to establish more effective standards for development within areas having open space resources.

This plan supersedes the 1972 San Luis Obispo County Open Space Element.

CHAPTER 1: SUMMARY

From the 1,000,000 year-old landmark, volcanic peaks known as the Morros to the stark beauty and endangered wildlife of the Carrizo Plain; from the diminishing wetlands and rare coastal dune ecosystems along our coastline to the oak-studded, rolling hills of the interior valleys; from the rich irrigated croplands of the Arroyo Grande and Cienega Valleys to the award-winning wines made from the vineyards of the Edna Valley and the Paso Robles area; from the orchards in the Nipomo Valley to the grazing lands in the coastal hills and interior valleys... these are but some of our abundant, diverse and valuable open space and agricultural resources.

These resources are the county's defining characteristics that make this county a special place to live and that draw visitors from around the world. Open space and agriculture are extremely important to the local economy because these resources are our sources of tourism, recreation and food.

Purpose

We need an effective plan to protect and sustain our valuable open space and agricultural resources so that we and future generations can continue to enjoy the economic and numerous other benefits that they provide - so that this county will continue to be a special place to live in and to visit.

The state requires that cities and counties prepare an open space element of the general plan. The intent of this requirement (according to Government Code Section 65562) is:

- to assure that we recognize that open space land is a limited and valuable resource that must be conserved wherever possible
- to assure that open space plans, together with state and regional open space plans, accomplish the objectives of a comprehensive open space program.

Goals

The major goals of this plan are to:

- Preserve, protect, enhance, and sustain areas with the following open space resources:
 - ecosystems and environmentally sensitive resources
 - recreation areas

- archaeological, cultural and historic resources
 - scenic areas
 - hazard areas
 - rural character
- Prevent urban sprawl by maintaining a hard edge between urban/village and rural areas and by establishing permanent separations between communities
 - Discourage premature, unnecessary conversion of agricultural, rural and open space lands
 - Maintain the agricultural land base of the county by clearly defining and designating productive agricultural areas for long-term protection.
 - Provide incentives to encourage landowners to maintain land in productive agricultural uses.
 - Maintain and strengthen the integrity of the county's agricultural preserve program as an effective means for long-term agricultural land preservation.

For a complete listing of the goals, refer to Chapter 6 for open space goals and Chapter 9 for agricultural goals.

How This Plan is Organized

- This plan consists of a text and two maps, one titled Land Use Designations and the other Open Space Lands.
- Chapter 2 provides background information on the preparation of this plan and the plan's relationship to other elements of the county general plan.
- Chapter 3 discusses the need to preserve open space.
- Chapter 4 discusses the types of open space resources addressed in this plan. Many of these open space resources, such as sensitive and scenic areas, recreation areas and hazard lands, are shown on the Open Space Lands map.
- Chapter 5 describes the land use designations that are mapped on the Land Use Designations map: Agriculture, Multi-Use Public Lands, Large-Lot Rural, Small-Lot Rural, and Urban Lands. All land in the county is classified in one of these land use designations in this plan.

- Chapter 6 contains the goals, policies and implementation measures for open space lands. Following each policy is a discussion of its purpose and the measures needed to implement that policy.
- Chapter 7 discusses the variety of issues facing agriculture and the need for the agricultural policies in this plan.
- Chapter 8 describes the different types of agricultural land found in the county. These descriptions form the basis for the system used to determine what lands should be designated Agriculture in this plan. A detailed description of agricultural land and an explanation of the criteria used in mapping land in the Agriculture designation is contained in Appendix C.
- Chapter 9 contains the goals, policies and implementation measures for agricultural lands. Following each policy is a discussion of its purpose and the measures needed to implement that policy.
- A glossary of the technical terms used in this plan follows the above chapters.
- The plan concludes with a series of appendices that contain a further discussion of the implementation measures contained in the main text of the plan, maps of the Natural Area Preserves, detailed discussion of the criteria used for mapping agricultural lands, copies of existing county policies regarding agricultural buffers and the right-to-farm ordinance, and further discussion of agriculture in the county.

How to Use This Plan

In order to find out how this plan applies to a particular property, follow these steps:

- **Locate the property on the Land Use Designations and the Open Space Lands maps.**
- **If the property is designated Agriculture,** refer to Chapter 9 for applicable policies and implementation measures regarding the following topics: agricultural land use (agricultural policies or AGP 1-12), agricultural land division (AGP 13- 15) and agricultural land preservation (AGP 16-19).
- **If the property is included in one of the designations on the Open Space Lands map,** first refer to the general policies and implementation measures at the beginning of Chapter 6 (OSP 1-8). Then refer to the specific policies and implementation measures in that chapter that apply to the particular open space feature or features shown on the Open Space Lands map. Refer to the listing of recreation areas and sensitive and scenic areas on the map to determine which policies apply to the

property. For example, the Recreation Area policies (see the following chart) apply to the recreation areas on the map. The sensitive and scenic areas listed on the map are followed by a description of what sensitive feature or features those areas contain - either plant or animal habitat, streams and riparian vegetation, scenic resources, or combinations of those resources. To find the applicable policies, refer to the policies that correspond to the particular sensitive feature as shown in the following chart.

If a property includes a watercourse shown by a solid or broken blue line on the latest U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle maps, the policies regarding streams and riparian vegetation apply.

The specific open space policies and implementation measures contained in Chapter 6 are organized as follows:

Open Space Feature	Policies
Recreation Area	OSP 9-12
Multi-Use Public Lands	OSP 13-17
Natural Area Preserve (see Appendix B)	OSP 18-22
Streams and Riparian Vegetation	OSP 28-29
Unique or Sensitive Plant and Animal Habitat	OSP 30-31
Scenic Resources	OSP 36-38
Hazard Areas	OSP 39-41

Other open space features are not mapped, at least at this time. For example, a property may be an area of known or suspected archaeological, cultural or historic resources, based on a site-specific study. The policies and implementation measures that apply to those open space features are organized as follows:

Open Space Feature	Policies
Ecosystem	OSP 27
Marine Resources	OSP 32
Archaeological, Cultural and Historic Resources	OSP 33-35
Community Separators	OSP 45

- **If a general plan amendment is proposed from agriculture or other land use designations in the LUE or this plan to different designations,** refer to Chapter 6 in the section titled Discouraging Premature, Unnecessary Land Use Conversion and Protecting Rural Character (OSP 42-44). That section contains criteria limiting conversion of agricultural land, conversion to Small-Lot Rural (Residential Rural) and conversion to Urban Lands.

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION

Background

This plan deals with both agriculture and open space because of the close relationship between those topics. As an example, according to the Government Code, agriculture is considered a component of open space. However, agriculture is also different than other open space lands because it supports one of the major industries in this county, is owned and maintained by private landowners and is not open to public access. At the same time, the open space benefits provided by agriculturalists are enjoyed by all the county's residents and visitors.

The county's efforts to prepare this plan began in the early 1980s. During that time, the agricultural community and others expressed concerns that existing county policies and standards did not adequately protect agriculture. In response, in 1984, the Board of Supervisors directed the Planning Department to prepare an Agriculture and Open Space Element of the county General Plan.

The Board of Supervisors designated the Agricultural Liaison Board as the group to assist in developing the proposed plan. The Agricultural Liaison Board provided comprehensive comments on several issues papers discussing various agricultural land use issues and on the initial drafts of this plan.

In September 1992, a Public Review Draft was released and widely circulated for over a year. During that time, the Planning Commission held a study session, the Parks and Recreation Commission held a well-attended public hearing and both commissions held a joint study session that was also open to the public. In addition, four public meetings were held throughout the county. Many comments were received from the public at the Parks and Recreation Commission's public hearing and at the four public meetings. Besides those meetings, numerous written comments were received from other county departments and government agencies and from the public, including agricultural, conservation and environmental organizations.

As a result of all the comments on the Public Review Draft, the proposed plan was substantially revised to become the Public Hearing Draft. That draft was then considered by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors at public hearings. This plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on ____, 1994.

This plan supersedes the 1972 county of San Luis Obispo Open Space Element.

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

Government Code Section 65300 et seq. requires the county to have a general plan that consists of seven mandatory elements. One of those is the open space element. In addition to the required elements, the general plan may include other optional elements that relate to the physical development of the county. This plan combines the mandatory open space element with an optional agriculture element. Upon adoption, this Agriculture and Open Space Element becomes an integral part of the general plan. It has the same force and effect as the other elements of the general plan.

State law requires that the general plan be an internally consistent statement of local government policy. Each element of the general plan must be integrated and consistent with all other elements. This plan is related to the Land Use, Conservation, Recreation, Safety, and Seismic Safety Elements of the General Plan. For example, some general goals relating to open space and agriculture are found in Framework for Planning (Inland Area) of the Land Use Element. As another example, policies relating to mining and mineral resources (a type of open space resource) are found in Framework for Planning and in the Conservation Element. In addition, the Coastal Plan Policies portion of the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan also has policies and standards that relate to agriculture and open space.

The policies in this plan are consistent with the coastal policies and standards. However, certain policies in this plan and their implementation measures do not apply within the coastal zone because the Local Coastal Program (LCP) already contains sufficient policies and standards that address the particular issue. In those cases, a note is made at the beginning of the policy stating that it does not apply within the coastal zone.

Language

For the purposes of this plan, all references to the Land Use Element (LUE), Framework for Planning of the LUE and the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) are also construed to mean the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan, coastal Framework for Planning and the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO), respectively, unless otherwise specified.

CHAPTER 3: OPEN SPACE ISSUES

Why Preserve Open Space?

The major attraction of this county and one of its defining characteristics is its magnificent and diverse open space resources. Preserving those valuable resources has numerous benefits, including the following:

- **It contributes to a high quality of life and makes our communities more livable.** Our lives are enriched by experiencing nature in an undeveloped state, both within urban areas and in rural areas.
- **It protects environmental resources such as important ecosystems and natural communities and rare and endangered species of plants and animals.**
- **It makes economic sense.** The scenic beauty of our open space lands and the recreational opportunities that they provide attract millions of visitors to our county every year. The income generated by tourism and recreation is of enormous importance to the county's economy. From 1990 to 1991, it is estimated that tourism and recreation directly contributed about \$600 million to the local economy (assuming a multiplier factor of 1.5).¹ By contributing to the attractiveness of communities, open space can maintain high property values. An example is the high property values that can be found where development is located adjacent to greenbelts or large, protected open space areas.
- **It maintains land available for production, such as agriculture, mining and water supply.**
- **It defines the identity of our communities and protects the rural character of our county.** The open areas that surround many of our communities provide visual relief from continuous urbanization, prevent urban sprawl and creates the character of the county's landscape that makes it special to the county's residents and visitors.
- **It provides a buffer between conflicting land uses such as residential and agricultural uses.**

¹ Source: Stephen K. Nukes and Associates

- **It protects public health and safety.** Maintaining open space on lands that are hazardous for development such as floodplains and unstable slopes protects the health, safety and welfare of new development and existing development. It also avoids public costs of paying for property and other damage resulting from disasters such as floods, fires, landslides and earthquakes.
- **It protects the natural scenic beauty of the county.**
- **It provides opportunities for education and scientific research, including the possible discovery of new medicines and development of new agricultural technologies.**
- **It preserves the history and heritage of our county.** Preserving open space can mean protecting archaeological, cultural and historic resources such as sacred sites used by Native Americans for thousands of years.
- **State law requires that cities and counties prepare open space elements** (Government Code, Article 10.5). According to the State Government Code (Section 65561), preparation of an open space element is needed for the following reasons:
 - to maintain land available for production of food and fiber, enjoyment of scenic beauty, recreation, and use of natural resources
 - to discourage premature and unnecessary conversion of open space land to urban uses
 - to maintain the economy
 - to assure orderly growth and development of the state and preservation and conservation of its resources
 - to promote the general welfare and protect the public interest in open space land

It is important to plan for the various uses of open space lands because conflicting desires for uses of open space lands can result in heated controversy. For example, off-highway vehicle use within the county has resulted in substantial land use conflicts due to trespass upon private property and destruction of natural habitats. Other conflicts can also occur, such as over-use of sensitive lands for hiking, mountain bicycling or recreation.

Failure to provide adequate open space can have undesirable consequences. Without an effective open space plan and implementation of open space policies and programs, new development can quickly consume valuable natural areas and other open space lands. Inappropriate development can also preclude open space uses through alterations of natural features.

Don't We Have Enough Open Space?

The county does contain vast areas of open space. For example, as shown in Figure 5-1, over 25 percent of the county land area is under some form of public ownership. Most of that land can be considered to be open space.

Although the county contains an abundance of open space, it is not evenly distributed. A majority of our population lives in the relatively urbanized coastal areas and Highway 101 corridor and must often travel some distances to enjoy the large open areas. It is true that publicly-owned lands do provide several open space functions such as recreation and protection of habitat, watershed and scenic resources. However, the County Park and Recreation Master Plan has identified existing and future shortages of recreational land in areas of the county. Furthermore, privately-owned lands also contain valuable open space features that warrant protection. Also, better policies and standards are needed to protect, manage and sustain the open space resources both on publicly and privately-owned land.

Why Protect Open Space Now?

Protecting our valuable open space resources is of crucial importance at this time. State and federal funding to purchase and set aside open space is now extremely difficult to obtain. As the population of the county increases and becomes more urbanized, there is a greater need for open space that is accessible to the population. At the same time, growth creates pressure to develop lands that have open space value. Without an effective open space plan in place, valuable and irreplaceable open space resources will be lost. The county needs to make every effort to protect, manage and sustain our open space resources, using innovative methods wherever appropriate.



CHAPTER 4: OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Our county is blessed with an abundance of open space features, including majestic natural landmarks, outstanding scenic vistas, important wildlife habitats, lands with recreational opportunities, lands that are valuable for agriculture and mining, and other valuable open space resources.

What is Open Space?

Simply defined, open space is any area of land or water that remains primarily in a natural or undeveloped state and that has some feature that is worthy of protection. Open space protects wildlife and other natural resources, including productive resources such as agriculture and mining. It protects archaeological, cultural and historic resources. It defines the identity of our communities and prevents urban sprawl. It protects scenic vistas and areas that are hazardous for development. It provides opportunities for recreation. Open space can include large wilderness areas in remote parts of the county, as well as small green space in the heart of a community.

The Government Code, Section 65560, also defines open space. According to the state definition, open space land is any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use as defined in that section, and which is designated on a local, regional or state open space plan as any of the following:

- Open space for preservation of natural resources (such as areas for preservation of plants and animals, streams, wetlands, and watershed lands)
- Open space used for the managed production of resources (such as forest lands, rangelands, agricultural lands, commercial fisheries, areas containing major mineral deposits and areas used for groundwater recharge)
- Open space for outdoor recreation (such as parks, trails, and areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value)
- Open space for public health and safety (such as earthquake fault zones, floodplains, water reservoirs, areas needed to protect air and water quality, and areas of unstable soil, fire risk and other hazardous conditions)

Open Space Resources

Many of the county's open space resources, including open space areas proposed by this plan, are mapped and listed on the Open Space Lands map included in this plan. Much of the land in this county that has open space value is publicly-owned. In this plan, publicly-owned open space includes major land holdings owned by non-profit land conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy. Figure 4-1 shows open space resources that are both under public and private ownership.

Examples of open space resources are areas used for recreation such as the Los Padres National Forest, land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, state parks and beaches, county parks, and other recreation areas such as Whale Rock Reservoir, Lake Nacimiento and the Morro Bay harbor.

Other open space resources have high environmental quality and special significance for ecological, biological, scientific, educational, or passive recreation purposes. Such areas include habitat for plants and animals, representative natural communities and ecosystems, important natural landmarks, scenic vistas and viewsheds, and areas of archaeological, cultural and historic resources. There are many examples of such sensitive and scenic features. A few examples are the majestic, landmark volcanic peaks known as the Morros that extend from San Luis Obispo to Morro Bay; the ecologically and economically important Morro Bay Estuary and wetlands; the rare coastal dune ecosystem of the Nipomo and Guadalupe Dunes and the dune lakes; the vast Carrizo Plain Natural Area that is home to many endangered species; the archaeologically, culturally and historically significant pictographs and petroglyphs of Painted Rock in the Carrizo Plain; and streams and riparian habitat such as San Luis Obispo Creek, the Salinas River and the ecologically significant Arroyo de la Cruz along the north coast.

Many open space resources are already included in Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) combining designations. SRAs are protected by development standards and often by special planning areas standards. Some open space resources identified in this plan are proposed to be included as SRAs: streams and riparian vegetation, the rare coastal and valley freshwater marsh community around Laguna Lake and areas of the rare serpentine bunchgrass community in the hills above Cal Poly University.

Other areas that are important for resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education are identified as Natural Area Preserves. They are described in Chapter 6 in the section titled Conservation of Ecosystems and Environmentally Sensitive Resources and are mapped in Appendix B. Other important open space resources are proposed to be studied for future identification and protection, including major ecosystems (see OSP 22-25), wildlife corridors (see OSP 26-27) and scenic road and highway corridors (see OSP 38).

AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

OPEN SPACE LANDS



NOTE: Due to limitations of scale, the designations on this map are generalized and do not represent precise property boundaries.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

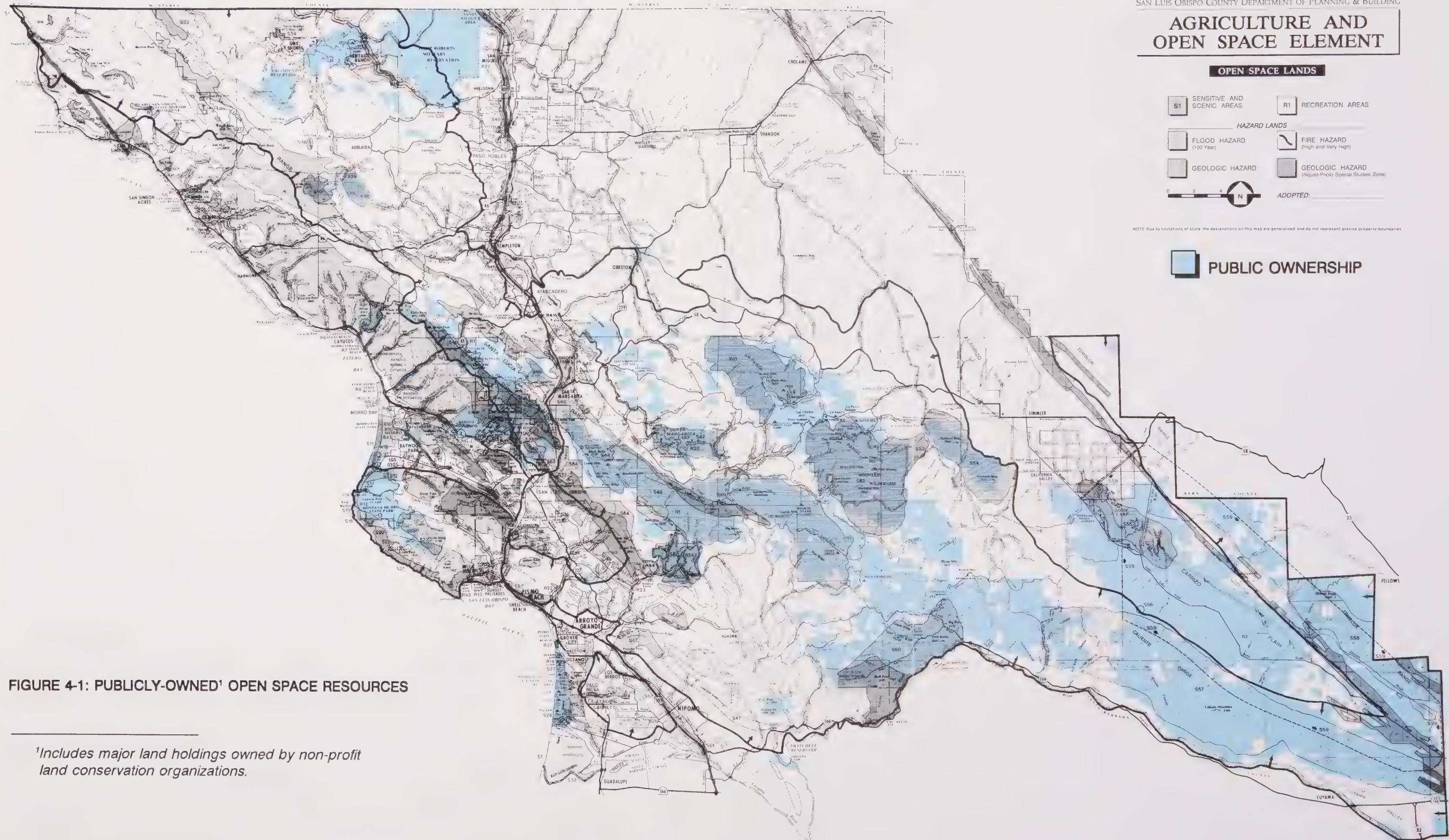


FIGURE 4-1: PUBLICLY-OWNED¹ OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

¹Includes major land holdings owned by non-profit land conservation organizations.

Multiple Uses of Open Space

As previously mentioned, a variety of uses occur on open space lands. Furthermore, any particular area of open space may serve a variety of functions and support several types of uses. For example, a wooded stream corridor may serve several functions, such as providing wildlife habitat, controlling flooding, recharging groundwater, providing scenic vistas, and affording recreational opportunities. These uses may exist in harmony without damage to the stream corridor. In other cases, however, mining or urban development can damage open space resources.

Many open space uses can coexist if they are managed properly. In general, open space uses that require a relatively undisturbed environment such as sensitive wildlife habitat are not compatible with uses that alter or disturb the landscape such as surface mining or intensive recreation. If open space resources are maintained in a relatively undisturbed state, the potential for multiple uses is increased. Figure 4-2 illustrates in a very general way the degree of compatibility between open space uses for the following purposes: preservation of natural and environmental resources, resource production, passive recreation, scenic protection, prevention of urban sprawl, and protection of public health and safety.

TABLE: 4-2
GENERAL DEGREE OF COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN OPEN SPACE USES

	Preservation of Natural, Environmental Resources	Resource Production			Passive Recreation	Scenic Protection	Prevention of Urban Sprawl	Protection of Public Health and Safety
		Crops	Grazing	Mining				
Preservation of Natural, Environmental Resources	●	○	○	■	○	●	●	●
Resource Production	■		○	●	■	■	■	■
Crops	■	●	●	■	■	●	●	○
Grazing	○	○	●	■	○	●	●	○
Mining	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Passive Recreation	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○
Scenic Preservation	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●
Prevention of Urban Sprawl	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●
Protection of Public Health and Safety	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●

- Highly compatible
- Somewhat compatible
- Slightly compatible or incompatible

NOTE: These classifications are very general. Individual situations will vary with the characteristics of the particular use.

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CHAPTER 5: LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The following is a description of the land use designations that are shown on the Land Use Designations map in this plan. It also shows the relationship between those designations and the land use categories in the LUE.

Multi-Use Public Lands

Multi-Use Public Lands consists of lands owned and administered by federal, state and local government agencies. It also includes major land holdings owned by non-profit land conservation organizations such as the Nature Conservancy, which manages land to protect open space. The Multi-Use Public Lands designation includes many properties that are included in the Recreation, Open Space and Public Facilities lands use categories in the LUE. Many of these lands are important for their forest, watershed, scenic, and recreational resources.

Figure 5-1 shows the approximate acreage and proportions of the county land area under the jurisdiction of public agencies, including government agencies and non-profit land conservation organizations. All together, these lands account for about 25 percent of the total county land area.



FIGURE 5-1: PUBLIC LANDS

Government Jurisdiction ¹	Acres	% of Co. Area
Los Padres National Forest (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture)	252,900	11.90%
Bureau of Land Management (BLM, U.S. Dept of the Interior)	181,200	8.50%
Camp Roberts (U.S. Dept. of Defense)	26,000	1.20%
Monterey County Water Agency	18,000	0.85%
State highways and county roads	13,000	0.61%
CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation	14,500	0.68%
CA Dept. Of Fish and Game	7,500	0.35%
The Nature Conservancy ²	6,100	0.29%
S.L.O. County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	6,700	0.32%
Miscellaneous (estimated) ³	4,400	0.21%
S.L.O. County Parks	12,400	0.58%
Total	542,700	25.57%

¹ Does not include incorporated cities.

² The Nature Conservancy manages a total of roughly 185,000 acres in the County.

³ Includes Cal Poly University, Cuesta College, California Mens Colony.

Agriculture

Chapter 8 describes the different types of agricultural land. These descriptions form the basis for the system used to determine lands that should be designated Agriculture in this plan. An explanation of the criteria used in mapping land in the Agriculture designation is contained in Appendix C.



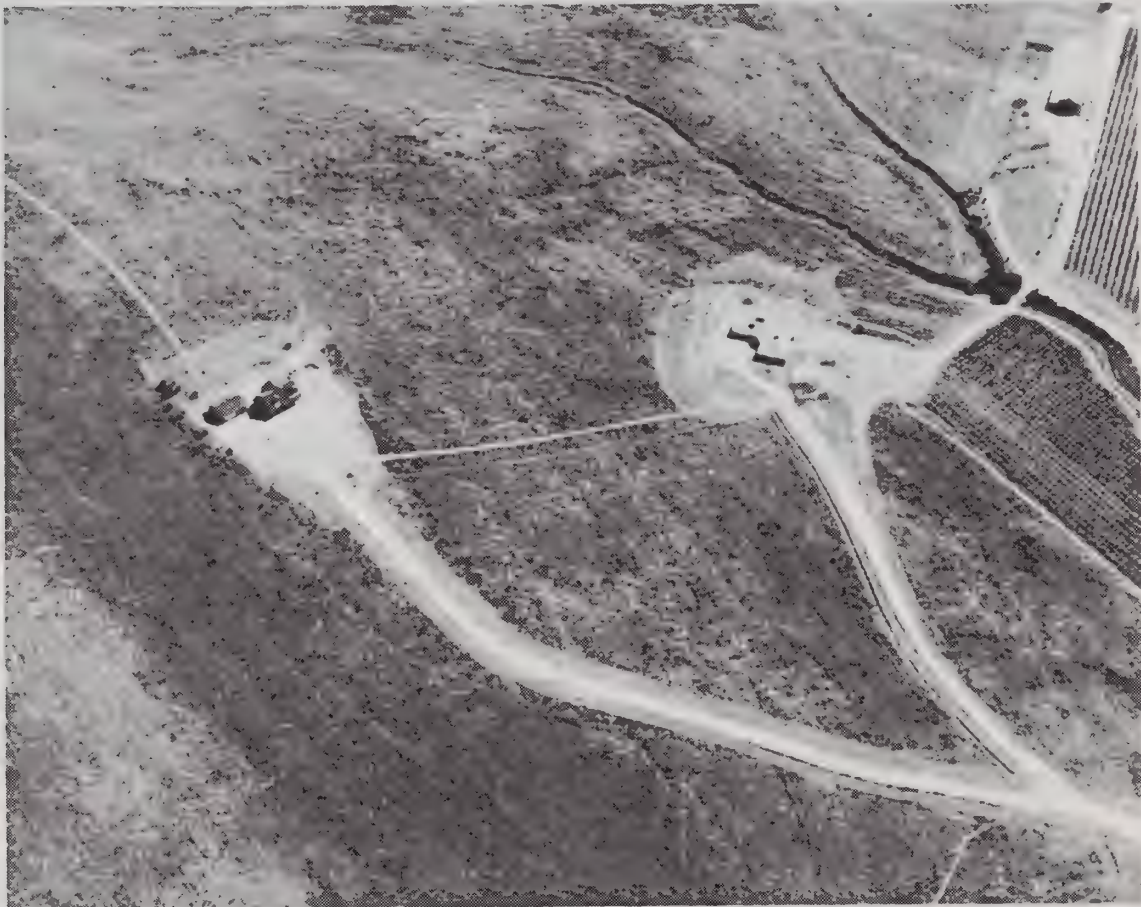
Large-Lot Rural

Large-Lot Rural applies to privately-owned properties that have limited agricultural potential and where the primary use is rural residences on 20 to 320-acre parcels. The Large-Lot Rural designation generally corresponds to the Rural Lands land use category in the LUE, but may also include areas in the Recreation land use category that are developed with privately-operated recreational uses on large acreage.

The main purpose of this designation is to encourage very low density rural development in areas of limited agricultural potential. Such development is intended to maximize preservation of open space, watershed and wildlife habitat; to maintain low population densities in rural areas; and to establish areas of primarily non-agricultural uses where such uses will be compatible with agricultural uses. Another purpose of the Large-Lot Rural designation is to help maintain a hard edge or clear distinction between urban/village and rural areas.

Most Large-Lot Rural areas are distant from urban areas. Those areas commonly have rugged topography, dense vegetation, high fire hazard, limited water supplies, and poor access. In those areas, large parcels should be maintained to limit population concentrations due to a lack of services and the increased risk of injury and property damage from natural hazards such as fires. Some Large-Lot Rural areas include large areas of parcels smaller than 100 acres where agricultural use is limited to dry farmland grazing uses, hobby farms and large rural estates.

Some Large-Lot Rural designations are located on non-prime lands near urban areas. These Large-Lot Rural areas may have some of the characteristics of the more remote areas designated Large-Lot Rural, but are also important because they maintain a hard edge or distinct separation between urban/village and rural areas. The Large-Lot Rural designation will maintain residential densities equivalent to minimum parcel sizes of 20 acres adjacent to urban and village reserve lines. That will provide greater flexibility and more options in planning for the future orderly growth of urban areas.



Small-Lot Rural

Small-Lot Rural is characterized by residential uses but may include scattered agricultural specialty uses, part-time agricultural activities and hobby farms. This designation includes existing developed areas, rural subdivisions where development of residential uses is appropriate and intervening areas that should be consolidated for rural residential use. Small-Lot Rural also includes land that may have been included in the Agriculture category in the LUE, but where the land is non-prime and is under separate ownerships that are smaller than 20 acres. Typical property sizes in Small-Lot Rural range from 2-1/2 to 20 acres.

The Small-Lot Rural designation corresponds to the Residential Rural land use categories in the LUE. It also includes the Residential Suburban land use category where that category is already located outside of urban and village reserve lines. Examples of those areas are the Residential Suburban categories south of Atascadero and in the fringe area northerly of Arroyo Grande. However, new Residential Suburban categories are not to be located outside of urban and village reserve lines. Small-Lot Rural designation also generally corresponds to the Fractured Rural designation in the former 1972 Open Space Element.

The purpose of the Small-Lot Rural designation is to provide for low density residential development and limited non-residential uses that maintain the rural and open landscape in areas where agricultural uses are not sustainable or are clearly secondary uses.



Urban Lands

The Urban Lands designation includes areas within the existing urban and village reserve lines shown in the LUE. It also includes areas outside of urban and village reserve lines that are already developed with or committed to development of commercial, industrial or other non-agricultural uses. Examples of such areas are Cuesta College and California Men's Colony, industrial areas on the Nipomo Mesa, and the commercial area on Cuyama Lane at the intersection of Highways 166 and 101. Those areas are included in Urban Lands to reflect some level of existing or future urban-type uses. However, this plan is not intended to encourage expanding urban and village reserve lines to include all of the areas designated as Urban Lands.



Relationship to LUE Categories

Figure 5-2 shows the relationship between the land use designations in this plan and the corresponding LUE land use categories. In some cases, the land use designation in this plan includes all lands in the corresponding LUE land use category. In other cases, the designation in this plan includes only some lands in the corresponding LUE category, depending upon the location and use of a particular site.

FIGURE 5-2
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGRICULTURE/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT
DESIGNATIONS AND LUE CATEGORIES

LUE CATEGORY	AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT DESIGNATION ¹				
	AG ²	LARGE- LOT RURAL	MULTI- USE PUBLIC ²	SMALL- LOT RURAL ²	URBAN LANDS ³
AG	X				X
RL		X			
REC		C	C		X
RR				X	
RS				X	X
RSF					X
RMF					X
O/P					X
CR					X
CS					X
IND					X
PF			C		X
OS		C	C		X

¹ These designations correspond to the LUE categories in this table where indicated with an "X" or a "C." An "X" means that the given Agriculture and Open Space Element designation in this plan includes all lands in the corresponding LUE category. A "C" means that the given Agriculture and Open Space Element designation may include lands in the corresponding LUE category, depending on the location and use of the particular site.

² Applies only within rural areas (outside of urban and village reserve lines).

³ Applies to areas within urban and village reserve lines, as well as some areas planned for commercial, industrial and other non-agricultural uses outside of urban and village reserves lines.

CHAPTER 6: OPEN SPACE GOALS AND POLICIES

Open Space Goals (OSG)

OSG 1: Preserve, protect, enhance, and sustain areas with the following open space resources:

- Recreation Areas
- Ecosystems and Environmentally Sensitive Resources such as:
 - Natural Area Preserves
 - Streams and Riparian Vegetation
 - Unique, Sensitive Habitat; Natural Communities
 - Significant Marine Resources
- Archaeological, Cultural and Historic Resources
- Scenic Areas
- Hazard Areas
- Rural character

OSG 2: Manage public open space lands to reflect the highest concern for preserving and sustaining open space features.

OSG 3: Closely coordinate with the various public agencies involved in open space preservation and management.

OSG 4: Promote maximum cooperation between the county and private individuals and organizations with regard to open space preservation and management.

OSG 5: Prevent urban sprawl by maintaining a hard edge between urban/village and rural areas and by establishing and maintaining permanent separations between communities.

OSG 6: Discourage premature, unnecessary conversion of agricultural, rural and open space lands.

These open space goals are implemented by the following policies. The first goal (OSG 1) addresses a variety of open space resources and is implemented by policies in the following sections titled General Policies, Recreation Areas, Multi-Use Public Lands, Private Inholdings, Conservation of Ecosystems and Environmentally Sensitive Resources, Protection of Archaeological, Cultural and Historic Resources, Protection of Scenic Resources, and Hazard Areas.

One important open space resource is the rural character of the county. Protection of that resource is addressed by the last two open space goals (OSG 5 & 6). Those goals are implemented by the policies in the following sections titled Discouraging Premature and Unnecessary Land Use Conversion, and Protecting Rural Character.

The second, third and fourth goals (OSG 2, 3 & 4) are addressed by a variety of policies throughout this chapter.

All of the sections in this chapter and many of the policies overlap; they are not distinct. For example, Recreation Areas and Multi-Use Public Lands can have sensitive and scenic resources. Likewise, preserving sensitive and scenic resources also helps protect the rural character of the county. Accordingly, the following open space policies and their implementation measures should be considered and applied as an integrated set of recommendations to achieve the county's open space goals.

The implementation measures and time frames that follow the policies described in this chapter constitute the action program for open space.

Open Space Policies (OSP)

General Policies

The following general open space policies (OSP) apply to many or all of the open space resources discussed in this chapter. To find policies for a particular type of open space resource, refer to the appropriate section in this chapter. Several implementation measures can be found following OSP 8.

OSP 1: Public and Private Development.

- **The open space policies and implementation measures in this plan shall apply to public as well as private development.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to recognize that public as well as private projects must carry out the open space policies and implementation measures in this plan. When public agencies propose projects, the agencies are in a position of setting a positive example for the rest of the community as to protecting and enhancing open space resources. Since the following policies and implementation measures are part of the county General Plan, the plans and programs of county agencies and special districts shall be consistent with them.

OSP 2: Conservation and Preservation by Private Landowners.

- **Encourage private landowners to protect, preserve and maintain open space resources on their own properties.**
- **Educate private landowners about the importance of preserving and maintaining environmentally sensitive resources and productive ecosystems.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage private landowners to protect and maintain open space where other means to do so are not appropriate. Private ownership can be an effective way to protect and manage open space, especially since much of the county's open space resources are located on private property. Private landowners are naturally most familiar with the resources on their own property and are often the best stewards of the land.

OSP 3: Future Open Space Protection.

- **Continue to identify and protect ecosystems and environmentally sensitive resources.**
- **Incorporate the latest technical and scientific information and techniques into programs to protect and manage open space resources.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to continue efforts to protect open space resources after such resources are mapped and perhaps included in preserves. In order for open space protection efforts to be successful, they need to be based on accurate, scientific information. As such new information becomes available, the maps, policies and implementation measures in this plan should be revised as appropriate.

OSP 4: Tax Default Acquisitions.

- **The county should retain properties acquired through tax defaults in order to protect and enhance open space resources in areas such as the hillsides above Cayucos, the Monterey Pine forests in Cambria, and in California Valley in the Carriso Plains.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to use tax default acquisitions because they can be an excellent way to protect open space resources at little cost to the county. In areas with important open space resources, the county should retain properties acquired by tax default. The properties can be assembled into preserves and maintained by the county. The properties can be traded to other agencies or conservation organizations. In addition, it may be possible to add these properties to existing ecosystem preserves in order to enhance those important open space resources.

OSP 5: Acquisitions from Willing Sellers.

- **Establish a program to encourage public agencies and conservation organizations to acquire land from willing sellers (in fee title or easements) in order to establish or expand Recreation Areas (see page 6-10), protect environmentally sensitive areas and protect other important open space resources.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to recognize that acquisition of open space resources from willing sellers is one of the key ways to protect such resources, even though it can be costly and public funds are often limited. Refer to the following General Implementation Measures for a list of the variety of ways to fund acquisition of open space. Other innovative funding methods should be explored.

OSP 6: Coordinating Acquisitions with Conservation Groups.

- **Closely coordinate efforts to acquire and manage open space with public agencies and with conservation organizations.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage close coordination with federal, state and local agencies and private conservation organizations such as the San Luis Obispo County Land Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy. Coordination is important because the decisions of other agencies can affect adjacent privately-owned lands and development of privately-owned land can adversely affect management strategies of agencies that administer public lands. By closely coordinating with and sharing information with public agencies and conservation organizations in the acquisition and management of open space, duplication can be avoided and efforts to preserve open space while protecting the interests of private property owners can be most effective. Cooperative agreements between the county and conservation organizations should be explored in order to use both public and private funding for acquisition and to allow open space acquired by the county to be managed by conservation organizations.

OSP 7: Open Space Management.

- **Encourage use of management strategies by public agencies or private organizations that sustain ecosystems and environmentally sensitive resources. Such strategies may include maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, and enhancement of sensitive resources where appropriate.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to recognize the importance of ongoing management of open space lands. Simply preserving open space resources and leaving them alone does not ensure their continued protection. Often, maintenance or restoration such as removal of exotic species or erosion control is needed in order to maintain healthy, productive ecosystems and environmentally sensitive resources. Such activities should be provided for within open space lands.

OSP 8: Cluster Land Divisions and Development.

- **Encourage the use of cluster land divisions and clustered development that will locate residential clusters on the least visually or environmentally-sensitive portions of properties in order to carry out the following objectives:**
 - Protect sensitive resource areas and other significant open space features by locating residential clusters on the least visually or environmentally-sensitive portions of properties.
 - Locate development on the portions of a site that are most suitable for development.
 - Maintain open areas within identified community separators where proposed parcels are smaller than 20 acres. (see OSP 46)
 - Provide agricultural and open space buffers to protect agricultural uses on adjacent properties.

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage development that is sensitive to the environment. This is done by clustering homesites and other development in suitable areas that are located away from sensitive open space resources instead of scattering them over the landscape. Clustering can minimize disturbance of terrain, reduce the extent and number of access roads and decrease costs of development. Cluster divisions also allow residents to share the ownership and enjoyment of scenic and recreational amenities in a common open space area.

This policy identifies types of situations where cluster division would be more appropriate than standard division and encourages the use of cluster divisions in those situations. The use of cluster land divisions should be encouraged in situations where the following objectives will be carried out (not in any priority order): protect environmentally sensitive resources, maintain community separators, establish agricultural buffers where needed, and locate development on the most suitable portions of a site. Such suitable areas may include open areas of gentle slopes adjacent to a road or a portion of a site least vulnerable to natural hazards and will depend upon the particular characteristics of the site. It is possible that a cluster division on a particular site may be able to carry out several of the preceding objectives. On the other hand, satisfying all of the preceding objectives on a site may not be possible because the solution to one objective may conflict with another. The best solution will depend upon the particular characteristics of the site.

One way to encourage the use of cluster divisions is to provide an additional incentive through a density bonus. Another way to encourage cluster divisions is to advise prospective applicants of the lower cost of development using the cluster approach (fewer roads, more compact building areas, etc.).

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should draft proposed amendments to the LUO, CZLUO and Title 21 to carry out this policy and consider providing a density bonus.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

General Implementation Measures

The following general implementation measures may be useful in carrying out many of the open space policies discussed in this chapter. To find implementation measures for a particular type of open space resource and its applicable policies, refer to the appropriate section in this chapter.

- **Establish priorities, criteria and a rating system for acquisition of significant open space resources from willing sellers so that public preservation efforts can be most effective.**

Discussion: Before embarking on an acquisition program, the county should identify the most significant open space resources and establish criteria and a rating system to determine which particular sites have the highest priority for acquisition at a particular time. Setting up such criteria is essential to assuring that public funds are used to acquire the most important open space resources at the appropriate time in the most cost-effective manner.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building, in coordination with the Department of General Services, conduct detailed studies, establish criteria and a rating system.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

- **Use a variety of strategies to acquire and fund acquisition from willing sellers of important open space resources identified in this plan, including the following:**
 - **Transfer of Development Credits (TDC).** TDC programs are discussed in detail in AGP 17 in chapter 9.
 - **Tax Default Acquisition and Sale of Excess and Tax Delinquent Properties.** See OSP 4 under General Policies for a discussion of tax default acquisition. In addition to retaining properties with open space resources, consider placing all revenue from the sale of excess and tax delinquent properties (without open space resources) into a special park and open space purchase and improvement fund.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should work with the Assessor, Tax Collector, and the Department of General Services to develop a program for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

- **Land Exchange.** Exchange publicly-owned land that is not needed for open space protection or other public uses for privately-owned land with open space resources. Land exchanges with other local, state and federal agencies are discussed in **OSP 13**.

Implementation: The Department of General Services should develop criteria for land exchanges for approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

- **Donations and Gifts.** Actively seek contributions of land, development rights, easements, and money from individuals and corporations, both for preservation of open space and recreation land in general and for acquisition of specific properties. In order to make this strategy effective, the San Luis Obispo Parks, Open Space and Trails Foundation (known as SLO POST) was created in 1991 to provide special assistance to landowners and to receive gifts. The county should also seek individual donations of labor and materials to maintain, restore or enhance open space lands. The county should continue to advise landowners of the advantages to the public and the general tax advantages of donations of land, development rights and conservation easements. A discussion of purchase of development rights and conservation easements is found in **AGP 18** in chapter 9.

Implementation: San Luis Obispo Parks, Open Space and Trails Foundation.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

- **Grants.** Actively seek all available grants and aid programs from state and federal agencies and private foundations to fund acquisition and maintenance of open space lands.

Implementation: The Department of General Services should work with public and private agencies to identify possible grants.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

- **Special Districts.** Consider establishing a Regional Parks and Open Space District, county service areas (CSAs) and Mello-Roos community facilities districts (CFDs) where appropriate to finance acquisition and maintenance of open

space. These special districts provide mechanisms for the public to finance protection of open space resources. Within CFDs, special taxes may be levied and bonds issued to finance acquisition and maintenance of open space upon approval by a two-thirds vote of the electorate within the district.

Implementation: The Department of General Services should prepare an analysis of alternatives for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

- **Lease-Purchasing and Certificates of Participation.** Consider using these additional methods to finance purchase of open space lands. Lease-purchasing is similar to a loan, whereby the county or other public agency leases a property for a certain period of time. At the end of that period, the agency has made principal and interest payments sufficient so that it ends up owning the property. Certificates of participation are often used together with lease-purchasing. They are similar to bonds issued to investors, who receive payments from the public agency's annual lease payments. Certificates of participation are not subject to statutory limitations on long-term debt and may be issued without voter approval.

Implementation: The Departments of General Services and Planning and Building should prepare proposals for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

- **User Fees and Concessions.** Consider using revenues from user fees and concession sales in developed county park facilities to finance acquisition and maintenance of open space.

Implementation: The Department of General Services should prepare a feasibility analysis and recommendations for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

- **Public/Private Joint Venture, Corporate Sponsors.** Consider forming partnerships with the private sector in order to generate income or services for open space preservation. For example, private companies may donate labor to construct recreational facilities or provide maintenance or restoration activities. Companies may also become sponsors for construction and operation of recreational facilities. In return, the companies benefit from advertising and increased public exposure. These strategies work best in intensively used open space areas. advertising and exposure for the corporation.

Implementation: The Department of General Services should develop a program for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

- **Taxes.** Consider using revenues from the transient occupancy tax (hotel or motel bed tax) and establishing a real estate transfer tax, charged when real estate changes ownership, to fund open space preservation.

Implementation: The County Administrative Office, Tax Collector and Assessor should develop proposed ordinances for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: Within 24 months from plan adoption.

- **Other Measures.** Develop innovative ways to fund acquisition and maintenance of open space, such as using existing county-owned recreation and open space lands to generate income.

Implementation: General Services should develop proposals.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

- **The Department of Planning and Building and the County Parks and Recreation Commission should review and comment on new plans and policies such as those involving acquisitions and disposal of land proposed by federal, state and local agencies and private conservation organizations. Refer major or controversial proposals to the Board of Supervisors.**

Implementation: The Departments of Planning and Building and Parks and Recreation should review, comment on and/or refer relevant plans.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

- **Revise the LUO and CZLUO standards for cluster land divisions to allow the following activities within open space lots that are approved as part of cluster projects: maintenance, restoration, enhancement, and rehabilitation activities such as erosion control and removal of exotic species.**

Discussion: The purpose of this measure is to implement OSP 7 to manage open space to sustain ecosystems and environmentally sensitive resources. Cluster land divisions and development can preserve important open space resources, but those resources often need to be managed and maintained for their sustenance, not just set aside and left alone. However, existing LUO and CZLUO standards limit disturbance of open space lots so that certain beneficial activities such as removal of exotic species in a sensitive habitat

are precluded. The standards should be revised to permit those kinds of activities where appropriate.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should draft proposed amendments to the County Code.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

Recreation Areas

Recreational use of open space lands is essential to the health, well being and quality of life of the population. It also makes a major contribution to the local economy. This plan considers Recreation Areas as an important use of open space land that is compatible with other open space uses.

In this plan, Recreation Areas are an outdoor recreational use of open space, under public and private ownership. They include both passive and active recreation, but the emphasis in this plan is on less intensive uses rather than intensive uses that are more characteristic of urban development. Recreation Areas include broad variations in types of recreation use, levels of recreation activity and degree of public use. A recreation area may be used for multiple activities such as boating, fishing, swimming, camping, picnicking, hiking and riding. It may also be used for single-purpose activities such as golfing. Recreation Areas are also appropriate for protecting environmentally sensitive resources and cultural features and for educational purposes.

Recreation Areas include county-operated or proposed regional parks and proposed Natural Area Preserves (see the section by that title). Recreation Areas also include land managed by agencies such as the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service and conservation organizations such as the Nature Conservancy. State and county beaches and parks are intensively used recreation areas characterized by multiple activities. In contrast, most National Forest and BLM lands are less intensively used for activities such as camping, hiking, riding, or hunting.

Recreation Areas may also include privately-operated recreation facilities. Such facilities can be important because they maintain land in open space while at the same time contributing to the county's economy by providing recreation facilities for residents and tourists. Privately-operated facilities can provide a source of income to rural landowners who establish golf courses, dude ranches, hunting and fishing clubs, health resorts, sport shooting facilities, and campgrounds. Private recreation retreats such as organizational camps provide needed recreational facilities for church and youth groups and others.

The county's land and water resources afford an enormous potential for recreation. However, recreation land is unevenly distributed and not necessarily located where it is needed most.

Some areas, such as the north county, lack parkland to serve the recreational needs of the existing and future population. Recreation Areas help identify areas that should be maintained or acquired from a willing seller for public recreation use. For more information on parkland acquisition, refer to the County Park and Recreation Master Plan.

Several county plans deal with different aspects of recreation. The County Park and Recreation Master Plan and its recommendations were adopted by the county in August 1988. The plan is primarily oriented to county park needs. It discusses existing outdoor recreation areas, establishes standards for types and acreage of parkland, and identifies general areas of the county for possible parkland acquisition. It also makes specific proposals for regional, community and neighborhood parks and methods for financing parkland acquisitions and improvements.

The County Trails Plan, approved in November 1991, deals specifically with hiking, biking and equestrian trails. It coordinates and supplements the efforts of other jurisdictions involved in providing trails, outlines county policy with respect to trails and identifies specific trail opportunities, with the emphasis on multiple use trails.

The 1968 Recreation Plan of the county General Plan also deals with recreation needs. It provides guidelines for selecting open space lands for recreation use, but deals primarily with recreational activities, in contrast to this plan's emphasis on open space needs.

In this plan, Recreation Areas are included in the Multi-Use Public Lands designation where there is an existing or proposed recreational resource under public ownership or ownership of a conservation organization. Examples of such Recreation Areas are Montana de Oro State Park, Lopez Lake Recreation Area, portions of the Port San Luis Harbor in Avila Beach, and properties in the Carrizo Plains Natural Area owned by the Bureau of Land Management and the Nature Conservancy). Multi-Use Public Lands are addressed in the following section.

Recreation Areas correspond to much, but not all land in the Recreation category in the LUE. They do not include facilities with private membership, because those facilities are not open to the general public and could potentially revert to other uses if the private recreation use is terminated.

OSP 9: Recreation Plans.

- **Continue to establish and implement policies and management strategies to provide recreational use of open space.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to make existing policies regarding parks and recreation facilities and trails more effective and to implement those policies through specific plans.

Implementation:

1. The Planning and Building Department and the Department of General Services should jointly prepare an update of the Recreation Element of the County General Plan, incorporating the County Park and Recreation Master Plan and the County Trails Plan.

Timeframe: Public review draft plan by 24 months from plan adoption.

2. Implement the policies in the County Park and Recreation Master Plan.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

3. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the county General Plan and Land Use Ordinance to establish criteria for locating proposed golf courses in rural areas.

Timeframe: Within 12 months of plan adoption.

4. Develop specific plans to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors for each county-operated regional park and Natural Area Preserve (see the following section) and implement those plans.

Timeframe: The Departments of General Services and Planning and Building should prepare a proposed priority list and work program for consideration by the Board of Supervisor within 24 months of plan adoption.

OSP 10: Coordination with Other Agencies.

- Work closely with other agencies to plan and provide recreational use of open space. Park sites and recreation areas shall preserve scenic and environmentally sensitive resources and not conflict with agricultural or other rural land uses.

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage coordination between agencies such as the County Department of General Services that plan and provide recreational uses and agencies such as federal and state agencies that have jurisdiction over resources that can be used for recreation. Coordination between agencies can help satisfy their different needs and concerns, make implementation of plans more effective and take advantage of unused recreational resources. Park and recreation development should be compatible with sensitive and scenic resources and not adversely affect surrounding rural and agricultural uses.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should work closely with the Department of General Services to identify appropriate park sites and recreation areas. The Department of Planning and Building should review proposals by the Department of General Services and other agencies to develop park sites and recreation areas and advise the agency whether such proposals are consistent with this policy and the county General Plan.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. Cooperate with appropriate government agencies to preserve the Lopez Canyon area and protect the watershed (land use regulations that preserve the scenic character and watershed around Lopez Lake are contained in the Huasna/Lopez Area Plan of the LUE).

Timeframe: Ongoing.

3. Cooperate with appropriate agencies to make public water supply reservoirs available for appropriate types of recreational use.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

OSP 11: Recreation Opportunities with Private Development.

- **Ensure that new development provides opportunities for recreation that are commensurate with the level of development and compatible with surrounding uses.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to assure that new development, which contributes to the need for recreation, also contributes toward satisfying that need. New development often presents opportunities to provide recreation for the residents of the development and in some cases, for the general public where significant recreation resources exist.

Implementation:

1. Encourage new development and land divisions to provide recreational opportunities that do not encourage or induce trespass on adjacent private lands. For example, encourage provision of trail connections to regional recreation and open space such as National Forest land.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. Wherever possible through the subdivision and development process, require public access to adjacent Recreation Areas, Natural Areas, shorelines, lakes,

rivers, public lands, and other areas planned for public recreational use, consistent with the Subdivision Map Act.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

3. Wherever possible through the subdivision and development process, acquire easements and dedications for parks and protection of outstanding scenic vistas and other important open space. Such open space includes shoreline areas, riparian habitat and other environmentally sensitive areas, floodplains, archaeological and cultural resources, and historic sites. Refer proposals for recreational use of easements and dedications to the Parks and Recreation Commission staff for evaluation before they are approved.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

4. The Planning and Building Department should draft proposed amendments to the LUO to require that large-scale development projects include appropriate recreational facilities within the project such as passive recreation areas, play lots, tennis and other courts, and swimming pools.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

OSP 12: Private Recreation Development.

- **Encourage provision of private recreation such as ranch recreation. Private recreation development shall provide an existing legitimate recreational opportunity, shall preserve scenic and environmentally sensitive resources and shall not conflict with surrounding agricultural and rural uses.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage private development of recreational uses. Such development is desirable because it can provide special recreation opportunities, relieve the burden on public land, maintain land in open space, and provide income for rural landowners.

Implementation:

1. Advise the public of suitable locations for private recreation development and encourage such development where compatible with surrounding agricultural and rural uses.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. Review development proposals against this policy.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Multi-Use Public Lands; Private Inholdings

OSP 13: Consolidation of Public and Private Lands.

- **Do not remove land from the public domain without careful study to determine its value to any government agency or the general public. Retain land in public ownership that has existing or potential value for recreation, wildlife habitat and management, conservation of ecosystems, water conservation, scenic, historic or other important open space purposes. Support retention of BLM land in public ownership where it adjoins the National Forest.**
- **Encourage consolidation of public and private lands into larger, more viable units in order to reduce "checkerboard" ownership, establish or expand recreation areas and protect other open space resources, facilitate better management of public lands and reduce trespass problems, and improve operation of farms and ranches. Consider the use of land exchanges for these purposes.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to support protection and enhancement of recreation and other open space resources on the large amount of publicly-owned lands in this county and at the same time recognize the needs of adjacent private landowners, farmers and ranchers. One way to accomplish this is through land exchanges with private landowners. Adding to existing publicly-owned lands can enhance opportunities for recreation and protect environmentally sensitive and other open space resources.

Implementation: Work with local, state and federal agencies and conservation organizations to identify lands that are suitable for disposal and exchange. The Departments of General Services and Planning and Building should prepare an inventory of these lands for review by the Board of Supervisors to determine the appropriate course of action.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

OSP 14: Trail Access.

- **Support improved trail access to large units of public land, particularly in the National Forest, where it will not conflict with environmentally sensitive resources and if sufficient policing and maintenance can be provided.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage non-vehicular public use of existing public open space lands where sensitive open space resources will not be disturbed.

Implementation: Encourage the U.S. Forest Service to acquire existing road rights-of-way for public trail access to National Forest land.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

OSP 15: Grazing and Agricultural Uses on Public Lands.

- **Encourage management of public lands that balances the benefits of agricultural use with protection of environmentally sensitive resources.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to recognize that publicly-owned grazing lands are an important resource, but that grazing or other agricultural uses should be managed to avoid potential damage to sensitive resources such as plant and animal habitat.

Implementation:

1. On county-maintained land, consider grazing and other agricultural uses as part of an overall management strategy, but limit or avoid such uses where they will degrade environmentally sensitive resources. The Departments of General Services and Planning and Building, in consultation with the County Agricultural Commissioner, should prepare a management strategy for review and approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: 36 months from plan adoption.

2. Cooperate with the federal government to encourage grazing on public lands where it can be supported without degrading environmentally sensitive resources.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

OSP 16: Off-Highway Vehicles.

- **Work with county departments and applicable local, state and federal agencies to block off-highway vehicle usage where it is inappropriate and conflicts with open space resources described in this chapter.**

Discussion: The Department of General Services and the County Engineer should coordinate with other agencies to prohibit the use of off-highway vehicles on public lands where it conflicts with open space resources and results in trespass on private property. In this county, off-highway vehicle use has resulted in trespass and destruction of natural habitats.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

OSP 17: Designation of Public Lands.

- **Designate public lands as Multi-Use Public Lands in this plan. Include such areas in the Open Space or Recreation land use category in the LUE.**
- **Designate publicly-owned land that is transferred to private ownership as either Agriculture or Large-Lot Rural in this plan, using the criteria in this plan.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is for the designations of publicly-owned lands, both in this plan and in the LUE, to reflect the land's open space value. For example, the LUE currently includes most BLM land in the Rural Lands category, but the Open Space category would better reflect its true open space value. When publicly-owned land is transferred to private ownership -- mainly for the purpose of consolidating respective land holdings -- the land should be designated either Agriculture or Large-Lot Rural (Rural Lands in the LUE) in order to maintain large parcel sizes on those generally rugged and remote lands. Agriculture or Rural Lands.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to revise the purpose and character statements for the Open Space land use category in Framework for Planning of the LUE to include all rural lands designated Multi-Use Public Lands in this plan that are not used or planned for active recreation or other intensive public uses.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

2. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the LUE to change the land use category of BLM land from Rural Lands to Open Space.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

3. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to amend the LUE to change the land use category to Open Space where major land holdings are owned by conservation organizations for the purpose of protecting open space.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

Sensitive and Scenic Areas

Our county contains a wealth of natural resources and features that must be preserved, protected and sustained. These open space resources have environmental, scenic, archaeological, historical, passive recreational, scientific, and educational value. These important resources include Natural Area Preserves, important ecosystems, unique or sensitive plant and animal habitat, archaeological and cultural sites, prominent geological features or natural landmarks, and scenic landscapes.

Many of the sensitive and scenic areas identified in this plan are already identified in the LUE by existing Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) combining designations. In those areas, planning area standards in the LUE and standards in the LUO protect sensitive resources and mitigate the effects of development. However, there are also other important sensitive and scenic areas and features that are currently not designated in the LUE. For example, Natural Area Preserves, major ecosystems, and key wildlife corridors identified in this plan and sensitive natural communities identified by the California Department of Fish and Game are included in the sensitive and scenic areas designation in this plan.

Characteristics of Sensitive and Scenic Areas

Sensitive and scenic areas are identified on the Open Space Lands map in this plan and on Figure 4-1, which shows the location of public lands with open space value. Sensitive and scenic areas have been established or should be considered in areas having the following characteristics:

- Areas that have high environmental quality and special significance for ecological, biological, scientific, educational, or passive outdoor recreation purposes, including but not limited to the following:
 - habitat where rare or endangered plants or animals currently exist;
 - sensitive, unique, or representative natural communities or ecosystems such as wetlands, estuaries, significant marine habitats, streams and riparian vegetation, and key wildlife corridors;
 - important geologic features or natural landmarks;
 - visually unique or outstanding features of the landscape, such as unusual landforms, scenic vistas and scenic viewsheds, including those visible from streets and highways.
- Areas of known or suspected archaeological or cultural resources (suspected resources to be confirmed by site-specific study during review of land use permit applications)
- Areas of unique historical significance



The following three sections of this chapter comprise the discussion and policies for Sensitive and Scenic Areas:

- Conservation of Ecosystems and Environmentally Sensitive Resources (including Natural Area Preserves)
- Protection of Archaeological, Cultural and Historic Resources
- Protection of Scenic Resources

Conservation of Ecosystems and Environmentally Sensitive Resources

Natural Area Preserves

Natural Area Preserves are areas of land or water managed by the Parks Division of the San Luis Obispo County Department of General Services that remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state. These areas provide resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities for present and future generations.

Natural Area Preserves are divided into the following three categories:

Natural Park:	A stand-alone preserve, not part of another park facility
Natural Area:	A preserve which is managed as part of another park facility
Community Greenway:	A preserve linking natural areas or one that is adjacent to and shapes community or urban growth

Natural Area Preserves include specific sites on both public and private lands. The public lands may be under county ownership and management or they may be proposed for county management. Natural Area Preserves also include areas of significant biological, geographic or riparian habitat that are not site-specific. The site-specific preserves are shown on detailed maps in Appendix B.

The purpose of the following policies is to establish Natural Area Preserves that encourage the conservation and preservation of the county's rich open space resources as they relate to park and recreational opportunities. The following policies, including the list of Natural Area Preserves, were developed by the San Luis Obispo County Open Space Subcommittee. This subcommittee was appointed by the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Commission.

OSP 18: Factors for Consideration to Establish a Natural Area Preserve.

- **Priority for consideration as a Natural Area Preserve will be given to those lands meeting one or more of the following factors:**
 - Habitat values and biological diversity
 - Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
 - Unique natural features, including unusual terrain or geological features
 - Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
 - Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands or other natural areas
 - Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- **Natural Area Preserves will not be established or managed solely for any of the following purposes, although the presence of these factors may contribute to the rationale for establishing a Natural Area Preserve.**
 - Watershed areas for surface water supplies or recharge areas for groundwater
 - Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flooding, earthquakes, unstable soils or landslides, or excessive noise

OSP 19: Establishment of Natural Area Preserves.

- **Establish Natural Area Preserves in the areas and locations described below, where: (Appendix B contains more detailed descriptions of the preserves, including maps, approximate acreage, features, management objectives and restrictions, and other pertinent information).**
 - There is available public land;
 - There is a willing private landowner or donor;
 - Funds are available for management.

Implementation: The Department of General Services should prepare a priority listing and proposed work program for approval by the Board of Supervisors and the Parks and Recreation Commission to establish Natural Area Preserves in the areas and locations described below.

Timeframe: Priority listing and proposed work program 24 months from plan adoption.

1. Public Lands: County Ownership/Management

- a. **Upper El Chorro Natural Area:** Located one mile north of San Luis Obispo off Highway One. Dominated by Dairy Creek and associated riparian habitat, this section of the park also contains large tracts of oak woodland and grassland. Vast array of wildlife including large populations of bobcat and turkey. Adjacent to other public lands and programmed for trail development leading to U.S. Forest Service property on West Cuesta Ridge.
- b. **Lopez Lake Natural Area:** Located 10 miles east of Arroyo Grande at Lopez Lake Recreation Area. Rugged and primitive, the area is valuable as wildlife habitat with frequent sightings of many large mammals including bear and mountain lion.
- c. **Santa Margarita Lake Natural Area:** Located eight miles east of the town of Santa Margarita at Santa Margarita Lake. The land is dominated with an oak/digger pine woodland forest with extensive areas of chaparral. Riparian habitat surrounds seasonal rivers and streams, ponds and the lake itself. Excellent wildlife habitat for the Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon and Peregrine Falcon.

2. Public Lands: County Management Proposed.

- a. **Pismo Lake Natural Area:** Located on Fourth Street in Pismo Beach. A highly endangered freshwater marsh surrounded by urban development. Considerable filling of the marsh has occurred in the past, with siltation

occurring due to careless land development. Consists of roughly 50 acres of wetlands and the rest composed of upland grasslands, riparian and oak savannah. Resting/feeding stop for migratory waterfowl.

- b. **Big Sandy Natural Area:** Located northeast of San Miguel at the county boundary, with some acreage in southern Monterey County. Riparian habitat on the Salinas River. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.
- c. **West Irish Hills Natural Park:** Located south of Montaña de Oro and east of Diablo Canyon Power Plant, the southernmost point of the coast range's geomorphic province. Rugged area which contains a variety of plant communities including the coastal sage scrub, coast live oak, Bishop pines, and limited areas of riparian habitat. As many as nine state or federally-listed rare, threatened or endangered animal species may occur in this area.
- d. **Cypress Mountain Natural Park:** Located in the Santa Lucia Range south of Nacimiento Reservoir. Large cypress groves, several rare and endemic plant species and other unique ecological conditions. A spring provides water for a varied animal population; there are particularly abundant reptile and amphibian populations in the more moist areas.
- e. **Tierra Redonda Mountain Natural Park:** Located near the San Luis Obispo/Monterey County boundary north of Nacimiento Reservoir. Tierra Redonda is a broad, table-top mountain with precipitous slopes. There are Native American artifacts and remains on the mountain top. Natural communities include grassland, savannah, chaparral, limestone streamside habitat, sand dunes and marshlands, as well as the predominant oak woodland community. One of the largest concentrations of Chorizan the species in the world is found in this area.
- f. **Rocky Canyon Natural Park:** Located east of the city of Atascadero. The California Native Plant Society has identified several plant species in the area which are on the CNPS List For Endangered Species. The area is rich in wildlife, including a large population of mountain lions and raptors. Isolated deep canyon locations feature the oak/digger pine community. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

3. **Private Lands: Willing Seller/Dedication.**

- a. **Elfin Forest Natural Area:** Located in the southernmost area of Morro Bay Estuary. Diverse and complex assemblage of natural plant communities, including coastal brackish marsh, riparian woodland fringe,

pygmy oak woodland, grassland, coastal dune scrub, and oak-manzanita association. Supports a documented 25 species of mammals, over 110 kinds of birds and 11 species of reptiles and amphibians.

- b. **Templeton Community Greenways:** Located in Templeton; main section near Las Tablas and Bethel Roads. The land is highlighted by rolling hills of exotic grasslands and ancient valley oaks with some small sections of riparian habitat.
- c. **Price Canyon Natural Park:** Located east of the city of Pismo Beach. Contains a variety of communities, including riparian along Pismo Creek, oak woodlands and grasslands. Potentially harbors a variety of rare plants which only grow in the presence of oil or oil shale. Numerous roads to oil sites provide opportunities for use as trails.

4. **Significant Biological Habitat or Geographic Features**

The following list of proposed Natural Areas is intended to identify critical habitat types or geographic features which merit preservation. The proposals are not site-specific.

- a. **The Morros Natural Areas:** Located in a 12-mile stretch of land from San Luis Obispo to Morro Bay. A unique continuous stretch of volcanic peaks forming a divider between the Los Osos and Chorro Valleys that extends from Islay Hill to Morro Rock.

For the following Natural Areas, site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

- b. **Salinas River Natural Areas:** Located in an area extending from the dam at Santa Margarita Lake north to the San Luis Obispo County/Monterey County boundary. Dominant community is riparian. The corridor is a combination of public and private ownership that creates access opportunities as well as restrictions.
- c. **San Luis Obispo Creek Natural Areas:** Located in an area extending from the city of San Luis Obispo to the Pacific Ocean. The 18-mile stream flows all year from its headwaters below Cuesta Ridge to its ocean confluence at Avila Beach. Excellent examples of riparian habitat. Also supports the southernmost population of steelhead in California.
- d. **Monterey Pine Natural Areas:** Located on various sites in the Cambria area. This grove extends from direct ocean influence zones to the drier

interior uplands. Gene variations occur within this range. Various microhabitats within the forest include a number of rare and endemic species.

- e. **Monarch Butterfly Natural Areas:** Located on various sites. Groves of trees used as over-wintering sites for Monarch butterflies are critical to the survival of western U.S. populations of this species. Potential sites in San Simeon near Sebastian's Store, Los Osos and on the Nipomo Mesa.
- f. **Oak Woodland Natural Areas:** Located in various areas, particularly in the Huasna and Adelaida areas. These two areas contain vast stands of native oaks that are for the most part undisturbed by urbanization.
- g. **Coastal Natural Areas:** Located in various areas along the coast. California's coastal zone and the coastal areas in this county contain a variety of unique habitat types, diverse biological species and majestic scenic vistas. The threat to these sensitive areas continues despite statewide preservation measures. Of particular concern are intertidal pools and estuaries.

OSP 20: Management Goals for Natural Area Preserves.

- **All future activities at Natural Area Preserves shall be directed by the following goals:**
 - Protect, restore and enhance the natural resources of the site
 - Provide a significant recreation/education experience for visitors from throughout the county
 - Provide an appropriate interpretive program that will increase public understanding and appreciation of the significant natural and cultural resources of the site
 - Provide managed public access that emphasizes enjoyment of the site's natural resources.
 - Achieve compatibility between protection of the site's natural resources and serving human use demands
 - Manage Natural Area Preserves in a manner that is compatible with adjoining ecosystems
 - Permit only those uses that are of a non-consumptive nature and that are compatible with preservation of the natural resources associated with each site

Discussion: The preceding goals are a fundamental commitment by the County of San Luis Obispo to provide Natural Area Preserves that serve primarily to protect, restore and enhance the natural resources of the area, while providing passive recreational opportunities. These goals and the strategies to carry them out (listed in Appendix B) are intended to provide guidelines for the creation of site-specific management plans for

maintaining the delicate and sensitive biosystems at county-operated Natural Area Preserves. Each Natural Area Preserve will be managed consistent with these goals, although variations will occur depending on the natural resources found at each site.

Implementation: Prepare management plans for review by the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, and approval by the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Commission prior to implementation.

Timeframe: To be determined, based on priority listing and work program described for OSP 19.

The intent of these goals is to provide a general natural areas land management framework for the operation, maintenance and management of Natural Area Preserves. The preserves may either be currently managed by the County of San Luis Obispo or managed by the county in the future through purchase from a willing landowner, dedication of open space land to mitigate development impacts, or cooperative agreement with another public agency.

OSP 21: Resource Management Strategies for Natural Area Preserves.

- **Carry out the preceding management goals through a variety of resource management strategies that are best suited to each Natural Area Preserve(the strategies are listed in Appendix B).**

Implementation: The following measures implement the preceding policies for Natural Area Preserves.

1. Employ a variety of techniques to provide Natural Area Preserves, including but not limited to the following:
 - Fair market value purchase
 - Donation by landowner
 - Exchange of property
 - Transfer of surplus government property
 - Use of state or federal grants
 - Dedication of open space land to mitigate development impacts
 - Securing conservation easements
2. Develop management guidelines for each proposed Natural Area Preserve with concern for: 1) natural resource values, 2) passive recreation opportunities, and 3) environmental education opportunities.
3. Solicit the involvement of various agencies in preparing effective management strategies. For example, investigate the possibility of preparing a Coordinated

Resource Management Plan (CRMP) in cooperation with the USDA Soil Conservation Service for one of the top five priority Natural Area Preserves.

Timeframe: To be determined, based on priority listing and work program described in **OSP 19**.

Ecosystems

The key to protecting biological resources and sustaining the great variety of lifeforms on earth is to protect and sustain healthy, functioning ecosystems and the biological diversity within them. This is the guiding principle proposed by this plan to protect environmentally sensitive resources such as unique or sensitive plants, animals, habitat, and natural communities.

An ecosystem can be simply defined as all the components of a biological community and the physical environment, and the interactions among and between them. An ecosystem can include the plants and animals from the invisible microorganisms all the way up the food chain to the largest predators; from the grasses and other plants that wildlife feed on to the soils that nurture the plants; from the rocks that help form the soils and shelter the wildlife to the air that all life depends on. Ecosystems can be small, such as a vernal pool or marsh, and they can be very large, such as a desert the size of a continent. Grasslands, forests and sand dunes are examples of ecosystems.

Ecosystems hold the key for preserving vegetation and wildlife. In fact, we can not truly preserve endangered species unless we preserve the ecosystem that they depend on and interact with. Accordingly, the wisest and most efficient strategy for preserving rare or endangered species - and in the long run the least costly - is to prevent them from becoming rare and endangered in the first place. The way to do that is to sustain entire natural ecosystems. Protecting entire ecosystems is complicated by the fact that they do not respect political boundaries; they often cross the jurisdictions of cities, counties, government lands, and states. However, by waiting until species are endangered before taking steps to protect them, the task becomes difficult, costly and usually controversial. We must shift our main focus from trying to protect individual species once they become endangered (although that is still important) to protecting entire ecosystems before that happens.

In order to maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems, it is essential to maintain biological diversity. Biological diversity is the variety, abundance and natural variability of different plant and animal species. Those characteristics also apply to the habitats and communities in which the plants and animals exist and the complex ecological processes which link the species with the ecosystem. One of the generally accepted key principles of ecology is that biological diversity leads to stability of an ecosystem.

Ecosystems are more than just the sum of their various components. They involve a complex system of linkages between plants, animals, their environment, and humans. If one of the key links in the system is broken - a certain keystone species, for example - the functioning of the

entire ecosystem upon which many plants and animals depend can be debilitated and the natural communities lost. The extinction of one keystone species - that can be a plant or animal, predator or prey - can be the beginning of the end for an ecosystem. The key to avoiding this is to maintain the complex system of linkages in the ecosystem. This can be done by maintaining large, unfragmented areas of natural habitat and by maintaining physical connections between those areas to enable wildlife migration - preserving biological diversity.

The following policies aim to sustain our important ecosystems and preserve their biological diversity. Since ecosystems exist on such a large scale, their protection must involve new and innovative measures that go beyond traditional land use regulations on development.

OSP 22: Establishment of a Network of Major Ecosystems.

- **Establish a network of Major Ecosystems that are representative of the region's most important natural ecosystems, using existing public lands such as Natural Area Preserves as the core for such areas.**
- **Work with and support the efforts of conservation and environmental organizations to establish Major Ecosystems.**

OSP 23: Protection of Major Ecosystems.

- **Protect and sustain Major Ecosystems, their biological diversity and natural processes. Limit the types of uses and intensity of development consistent with those objectives. On public lands, limit human disturbance as much as possible and prohibit development and activities that are detrimental to the functioning of the Major Ecosystem.**

OSP 24: Protecting Ecosystems Through Development Review.

- **When evaluating proposed development and land divisions for their effects on environmental resources, give highest priority to protecting and sustaining entire ecosystems, their biological diversity and natural processes.**

OSP 25: Management of Major Ecosystems.

- **Manage Major Ecosystems as needed to protect biological diversity, restore habitat and sustain the functioning of the ecosystem.**

Discussion: The main purpose of **OSP 22-25** is for the county to establish and maintain a network of Major Ecosystems. Possible examples of such Major Ecosystems are coastal dunes (the Nipomo and Guadalupe Dunes), coastal terrace and mountains (the Irish Hills and adjacent coastal terrace, for example), interior mountains (portions of the

Santa Lucia and La Panza ranges, for example), and interior desert such as the Carrizo Plain Natural Area).

Major Ecosystems, in order to be viable, must be comprised of large, contiguous areas rather than several smaller, isolated, fragmented islands of habitat. The ecosystems must be large enough to allow for the migration of wildlife and to sustain the diversity of wildlife populations. Ecosystems should be established in areas that have minimal disturbance and high biological diversity. The minimum size and the boundaries of Major Ecosystems should be based on the ecology of the particular ecosystem, using accepted principles of ecology and wildlife management. However, the core of the ecosystems should be existing public lands such as those controlled by the Bureau of Land Management and the U. S. Forest Service. Natural Area Preserves (see the preceding section by that title) have excellent potential to serve as the cores of Major Ecosystems.

OSP 26: Wildlife Corridors.

- **Identify and protect key wildlife corridors that link habitat areas, including Major Ecosystems.**
- **Where feasible, reestablish important wildlife corridors that may have been damaged or interrupted.**

OSP 27: Protecting Wildlife Corridors in the Development Process.

- **Public and private development and land division proposals shall avoid disturbance of identified key wildlife corridors, unless there is no practicable alternative.**
- **Encourage the design of proposed development and land divisions to include the location of open space areas that are contiguous with existing areas of natural open space.**

Discussion: Ecosystems must have a sufficiently, large contiguous area of habitat in order to support a diversity of plant and animal populations. In contrast, small, isolated areas of habitat are not conducive to sustaining wildlife populations in the long term. Over time, the number of different species and the numbers of individual animals will decline in such habitat "islands" due to inbreeding and competition for food and habitat, for example. This phenomenon is referred to as the "island effect."

The island effect also occurs when habitat areas are surrounded by development. Animals that leave the habitat are more likely to leave permanently or be killed by household pets, pesticides and other human impacts. Without contiguous areas of natural habitat, the animal populations are not replenished from adjacent areas of habitat like

they are in large undeveloped areas, where animals can move freely from one area to another. Therefore, over time, the numbers and diversity of wildlife will decline.

The best way to avoid this island effect is to preserve large, contiguous areas of natural habitat such as Major Ecosystems. Another strategy is to encourage development projects to locate open space so that it is contiguous with large areas of natural open space in order to expand such areas. That strategy is stated in **OSP 27**.

Even if the preceding measures are taken, there will continue to be small, scattered areas of habitat surrounded by development. Another way to minimize this island effect is to connect those habitat islands by wildlife corridors that allow migration of wildlife between areas of habitat. Good examples of wildlife corridors are streams and riparian corridors. Wildlife corridors can also be created by humans. An example is an underpass that reduces the island effect created by a highway or aqueduct. The creation of such corridors could be required in certain circumstances in order to minimize the effects of public and private construction projects on wildlife migration.

Wildlife corridors should be protected on a local level such as between isolated canyons in the same vicinity. They should also be protected on a more regional level such as between Major Ecosystems. The most significant wildlife corridors should be identified through a study and steps taken to protect them through development standards and other means such as transfer of development credits, tax default acquisition and other acquisition strategies (see the General Implementation Measures at the beginning of this chapter). Wildlife corridors must be of sufficient length, width and design to ensure the continued migration of species, but the size of the corridors will vary with the particular situation.

Implementation: The following measures implement the preceding policies **OSP 22-27** regarding Major Ecosystems and wildlife corridors.

1. Using an inventory of the county's ecological communities, map the location of Major Ecosystems that are of sufficient size to sustain biological diversity and functioning of the ecosystem. Also map the location of key wildlife corridors that are of sufficient size to ensure continued migration of species. Conduct the mapping of Major Ecosystems and wildlife corridors in consultation with environmental and conservation organizations and public agencies.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

2. Determine what levels of use and intensity of development are consistent with sustaining Major Ecosystems and establish appropriate development standards and limitations on use within Major Ecosystems. Work with applicable public agencies and conservation and environmental organizations to establish allowed uses, development standards and management strategies within Major Ecosystems.

Amend the LUO and LUE area plans to reflect the allowed uses and development standards.

Timeframe: 12 months from completion of mapping of Major Ecosystems per item #1 above.

3. Encourage the creation of new wildlife corridors such as road underpasses in order to mitigate the effects of public or private development on key existing wildlife corridors.

Timeframe: Ongoing through review of development proposals.

4. Educate the public about the importance and benefits of protecting entire ecosystems and wildlife corridors. Do this through everyday public contact and by supporting the efforts of conservation and environmental organizations in this regard.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

5. Use habitat banking (see the implementation measure for **OSP 31**), transfer of development credits, tax default acquisitions and other means to acquire from willing sellers key properties needed to protect Major Ecosystems and key wildlife corridors (see the general implementation measures at the beginning of this chapter for a detailed discussion of acquisition strategies).

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Special Environmental Resources

Streams and Riparian Vegetation

Streams and their associated riparian vegetation are an important open space resource. Preserving streams and riparian vegetation in a natural state offers many benefits for landowners and the public, including the following:

- Preserves important habitat for wildlife such as fish spawning areas, and preserves key corridors for wildlife migration and survival
- Helps maintain the productivity of estuaries downstream
- Maintains high aesthetic quality
- Provides groundwater recharge
- Provides potential recreational opportunities where identified by this or other plans

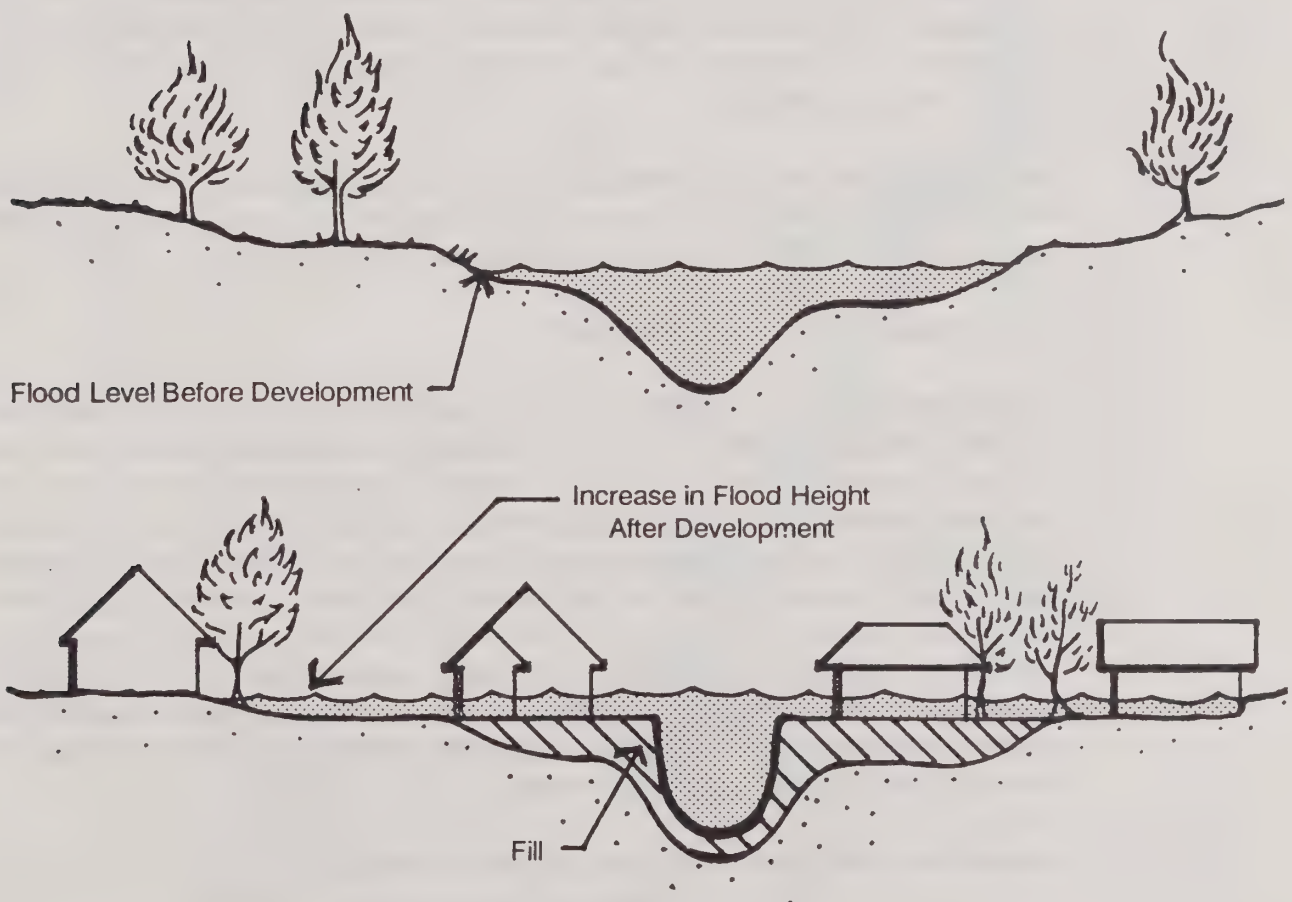
Maintaining adequate setbacks between development and streams/riparian vegetation provides the following benefits:

- Provides a needed buffer area to protect the habitat from direct impacts of development
- Reduces erosion and sedimentation of the stream
- Maintains a natural channel to carry storm water flow (see Figure 6-1) while reducing the possibility of flooding without the need for costly, unsightly and environmentally damaging stream channelization or other alterations

FIGURE 6-1: FLOOD CORRIDOR

Flood Corridor: The top figure shows a floodplain before development. The bottom figure shows changes in the floodplain with development.

Before development the creek channel (or flood area) is wide. With development, the channel becomes narrow (due to fill and structures), percolation is reduced, and velocity increased. Structures located in this area are flooded.



The following two policies are intended to preserve streams and riparian vegetation. To do so, public and private development adjacent to stream corridors must include special measures to protect the habitat. These policies apply to watercourses shown by a solid or broken blue line on the latest U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle maps and their associated riparian vegetation.

OSP 28: Stream Corridor Preservation.

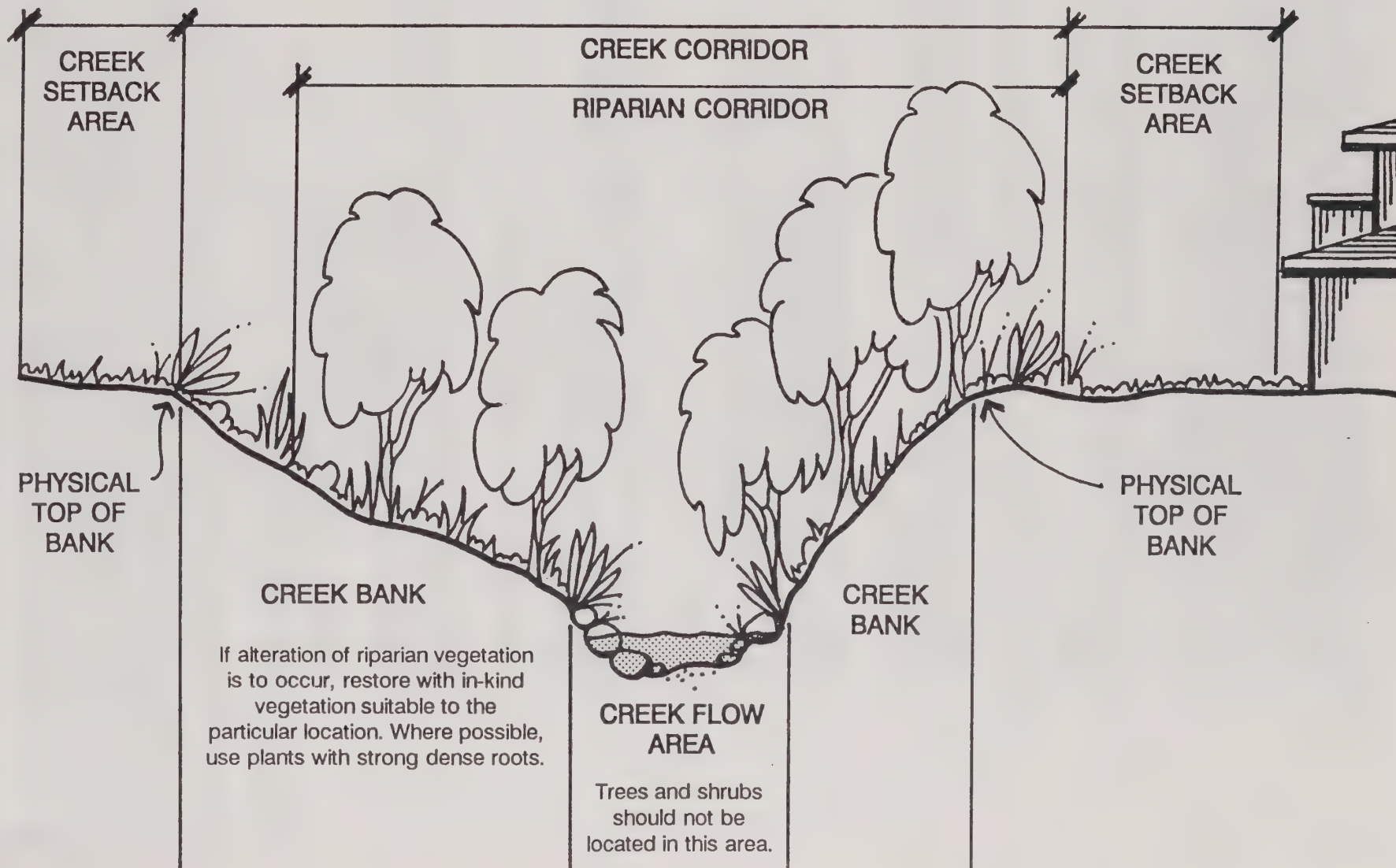
- **Preserve stream corridors in their natural state wherever possible.**
- **Establish a network of natural riparian corridors to create a system of open space and wildlife corridors (see OSP 26).**

OSP 29: Development within Stream Corridors (This policy and the following implementation measures do not apply within the coastal zone because the LCP already includes detailed policies and standards to protect streams and riparian vegetation.)

- **Require new development and land divisions to take measures to protect streams and riparian habitat vegetation and avoid significant impacts on the habitat, including the following:**
 - Establish a setback of 50 to 100 feet from the bank of the watercourse or outside the dripline of riparian vegetation, whichever distance is greater, as shown in Figure 6-2. Provide for adjustments where alternatives are infeasible or more environmentally damaging.
 - Locate uses, structures and grading outside of the established setback, but provide for adjustments where alternatives are infeasible or more environmentally damaging. Also allow for erosion control and habitat restoration activities.
 - Limit alteration of riparian vegetation.
 - Allow stream channel alterations only if no practicable alternative is available and only for water supply and flood control projects, maintenance of existing channels and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat. If alterations are to occur, the proposed project should utilize natural creek alterations (such as stabilization methods which maintain an earthen channel and provide additional riparian vegetation). Gabions, rocks, and other bank stabilization methods which allow planting of both trees and shrubs within the bank protection may be allowed only when no practicable alternative to natural creek alterations exist. If no practicable alternative to the utilization of gabions, rocks, and other bank stabilization methods which allow plantings exist, hard bank protection (solid walls) which do not allow for plantings may be permitted.
 - Assure that stream diversion structures protect habitats.

FIGURE 6-2: CREEK CORRIDOR

In this figure the creek corridor extends from physical top of bank on the left to the edge of the riparian vegetation on the right.



- When no practicable alternative to a significant impact to creek resources exists, the developer should implement a county approved mitigation and monitoring plan that will avoid or ameliorate significant impacts. The mitigation and monitoring plan should be (a) in accordance with official California Department of Fish and Game guidelines, and (b) prepared and implemented by qualified professionals under funding by the applicant.
- Preserve stream corridors and setback areas through easements or dedications (see Figure 6-3). Subdivision parcel lines shall be located to optimize resource protection.
- Creek protection policies and methods shall apply to private and public projects.
- Design development and land divisions so that all building sites are outside of the established setback. Encourage the use of cluster land divisions and development for that purpose.
- Protect riparian corridors by encouraging the use of easements and dedications within the established setbacks.
- Restore damaged habitats where feasible as a condition of approval.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed LUE and LUO amendments to include streams and riparian vegetation in the Sensitive Resource Area combining designation.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

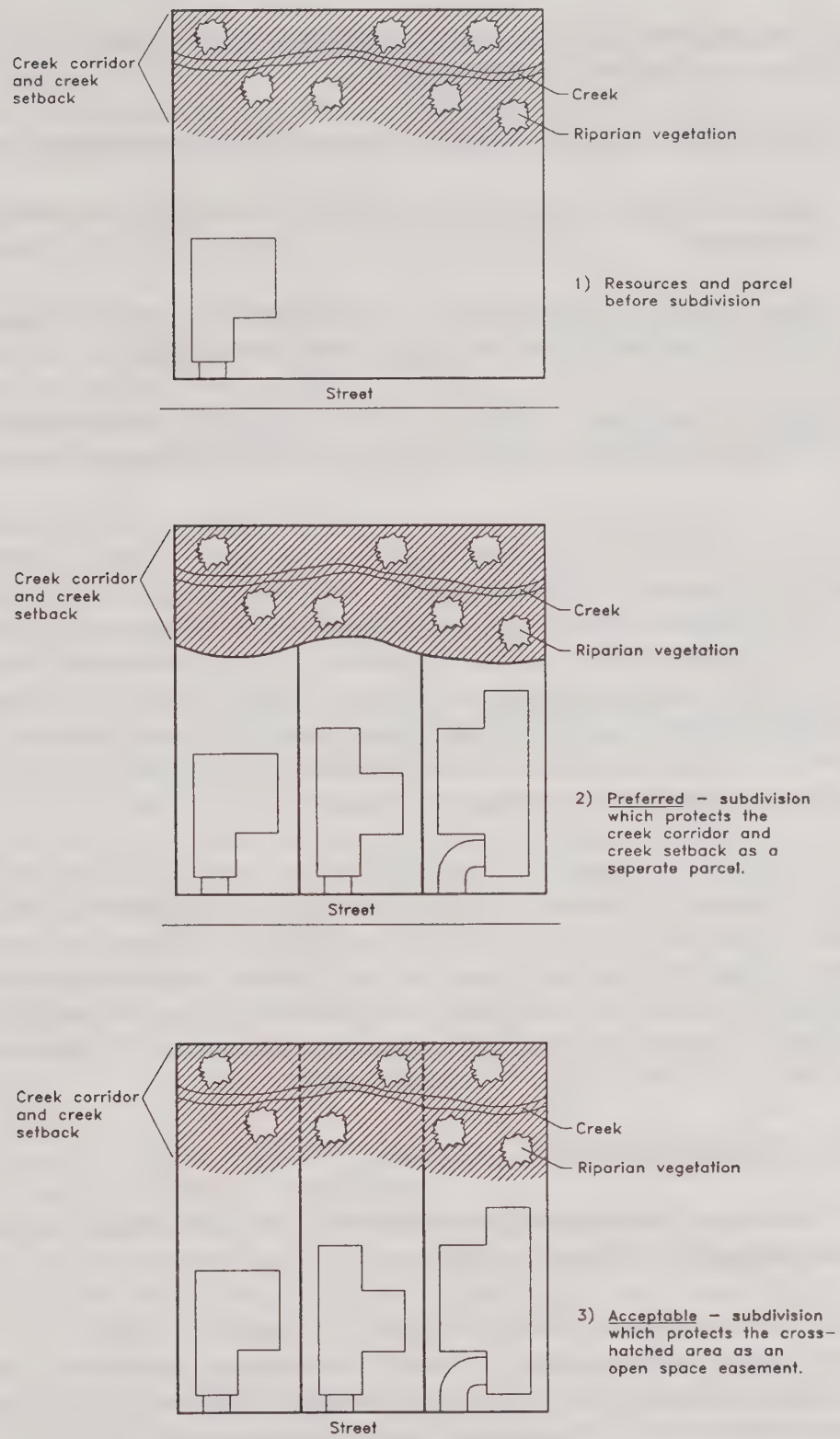
2. The Department of Planning and Building should draft proposed amendments to the LUO and Title 21 to establish development standards to implement the measures contained in this policy.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

Unique or Sensitive Plant and Animal Habitat

Unique or sensitive plant and animal habitats are an important open space resource. Maintaining these habitats is essential for survival of individual species of rare or endangered plants and animals, for example. Maintaining habitats also helps sustain the entire ecosystem and the complex web of relationships between plants and animals. Sustaining a healthy ecosystem where biological diversity is maintained is essential to the survival of unique or sensitive vegetation and wildlife (see the preceding section titled Ecosystems). Thus, the emphasis should be on sustaining the entire ecosystem that supports the sensitive plants and animals.

FIGURE 6-3: RIPARIAN CORRIDOR PROTECTION



Preserving unique or sensitive plant and animal habitat is also beneficial because it provides the following:

- A high aesthetic and environmental quality that also contributes to the attractiveness of this county for tourism
- Opportunities for people to experience and appreciate the natural environment
- Opportunities for recreational uses such as hiking, bird watching, nature study, and photography
- Opportunities for education and scientific research, including the discovery of new medicines and ways to increase agricultural productivity.

Preserving our valuable but rapidly diminishing wetland habitats also provide the benefits of filtering pollution, protecting water quality, controlling flooding, and maintaining a high water table.

Unique plant or animal habitat includes the following: habitat of rare, endangered or threatened plant or animal species as classified by state and federal agencies and the California Native Plant Society; wetlands and marshes; areas subject to Sensitive Resource Area combining designations in the LUE applied because of unique or sensitive species; and sensitive natural communities as identified in the California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base (such as Valley Oak Woodland, California Bay Forest, Central Maritime Chaparral, and Pine Bluegrass Grassland). Protection of sensitive natural communities is important because they often contain groups of rare, threatened or endangered species.

The following policies regarding unique or sensitive plant and animal habitat are intended to protect and maintain this important open space resource, with emphasis on sustaining the entire ecosystem on which the unique or sensitive plants and animals depend. Public and private development must help carry out this objective. This plan proposes strategies that would enable development in isolated areas of unique or sensitive vegetation and wildlife to contribute to the preservation of larger, more significant areas of such resources. By doing so, development can be beneficial to the preservation of important habitats.

OSP 30: Habitat Protection.

- **Protect and maintain unique or sensitive plant and animal habitat, with the aim of protecting the entire ecosystem.**

OSP 31: Development within Unique or Sensitive Habitat. (This policy and the following implementation measure to establish development standards do not apply within the coastal zone because the LCP already includes detailed policies and standards to protect plant and animal habitat.)

- **Require new development and land divisions to take measures to protect unique or sensitive plant and animal habitat, including the following:**

- As the highest priority, avoid significant impacts on the habitat. Locate uses, structures and grading on the portion of a site that is outside of the habitat, but provide for adjustments where alternatives are infeasible or more environmentally damaging. Also allow for erosion control and habitat restoration activities.
- As the second and third priorities, mitigate the impacts of development by replacing the habitat on-site and off-site, respectively.
- Establish buffer areas from sensitive habitat where grading and development are generally not allowed. Design development and land divisions so that all building sites are outside of the established buffer area and encourage the use of cluster land divisions and development for that purpose. Provide for adjustments where alternatives are infeasible or more environmentally damaging.
- Protect habitat, especially where it is connected to other large areas of unique or sensitive habitat, by encouraging the use of easements and dedications.
- Restore damaged habitats where feasible as a condition of approval.

Implementation: Establish "habitat banking" and habitat enhancement programs in order to mitigate the effects of development on unique or sensitive habitat, as follows:

1. Continue to identify areas of unique or sensitive plant and animal habitat and amend the LUE to include such areas in the Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) combining designation. In addition, refine the existing boundaries of SRA combining designations based on field surveys, environmental impact reports and scientific information. Identification of areas of unique or sensitive plant and animal habitat shall: a) specify the features that need to be protected, b) state why it is important to protect those features, and c) where applicable, establish specific boundaries that define the minimum area necessary to protect the identified features.
2. Amend the LUO and Title 21 by establishing development standards to implement the measures contained in this policy.

Timeframe: In coordination with implementation measures specified in the discussion of Natural Area Preserves (OSP 18, 19, 20, 21) and Major Ecosystems (OSP22, 23, 24, 25).

Discussion: "Habitat banking" involves the purchase by the county or other agency of large, regionally significant areas of habitat or ecosystems - Natural Area Preserves or Major Ecosystems, for example (see the preceding sections that discuss those topics).

The funding is obtained from mitigation fees paid by developers to mitigate the effects of individual development projects on smaller, isolated and unconnected pieces of habitat. Larger areas of habitat have a greater chance of maintaining productive ecosystems and species diversity and hence the survival of plants and animals. Thus, habitat banking, by preserving such large areas, affords a way for development projects to proceed while contributing to preservation of areas that have the best chance of supporting productive ecosystems in the long term.

A habitat enhancement program is very similar to habitat banking, but involves the restoration or enhancement of large, regionally significant areas of habitat or ecosystems as a way to mitigate the effects of development on smaller, isolated areas of habitat within individual projects. This program can involve either paying mitigation fees or requiring developers to be directly responsible for performing enhancement or restoration activities.

Marine Resources

The county's shoreline and the waters off our shore contain valuable open space resources of national and even worldwide significance. These resources are of biological, ecological and economic importance. They include the following:

- Spectacular scenery, pristine waters and recreational opportunities that attract millions of tourists each year and contribute greatly to the local economy.
- High-yield fisheries of great importance to the local economy.
- Sensitive coastal habitats such as estuaries like the Morro Bay Estuary, rocky intertidal areas, coral communities and kelp forests
- Threatened and endangered species such as several species of whales, the Southern Sea Otter, California Brown Pelican, Least Tern, and others.
- Key whale migration routes
- Habitat for large populations of elephant seals, harbor seals and otters
- Upwelling of deep ocean waters that provides one of the most significant nutrient sources for marine wildlife in the entire North Pacific Basin
- Benthic (ocean bottom) communities of worldwide significance

Some of these open space resources are already given a level of protection. For example, the existing Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the California Sea Otter Game Refuge are located in the waters north of Santa Rosa Creek, Cambria. In addition, a sanctuary instituted

by the state prohibits the leasing and development of oil and gas within state waters off the central coast.

Many valuable marine resources are still in need of special recognition and protection, especially from the potential effects of offshore energy development. Although the state and federal governments have primary jurisdiction over offshore waters, the county's policies can influence how and where marine resources are protected. This can be done by supporting establishment of a national marine sanctuary. The Offshore Energy Element discusses this and other strategies. They include opposing future oil and gas lease sales in our sensitive marine environment and otherwise influencing the timing, location and impacts of offshore oil and gas development and related onshore activities. In addition to the Offshore Energy Element, the LCP also addresses the protection of marine resources.

The following policies affirm the importance of our valuable marine resources and the county's commitment to securing their long-term protection.

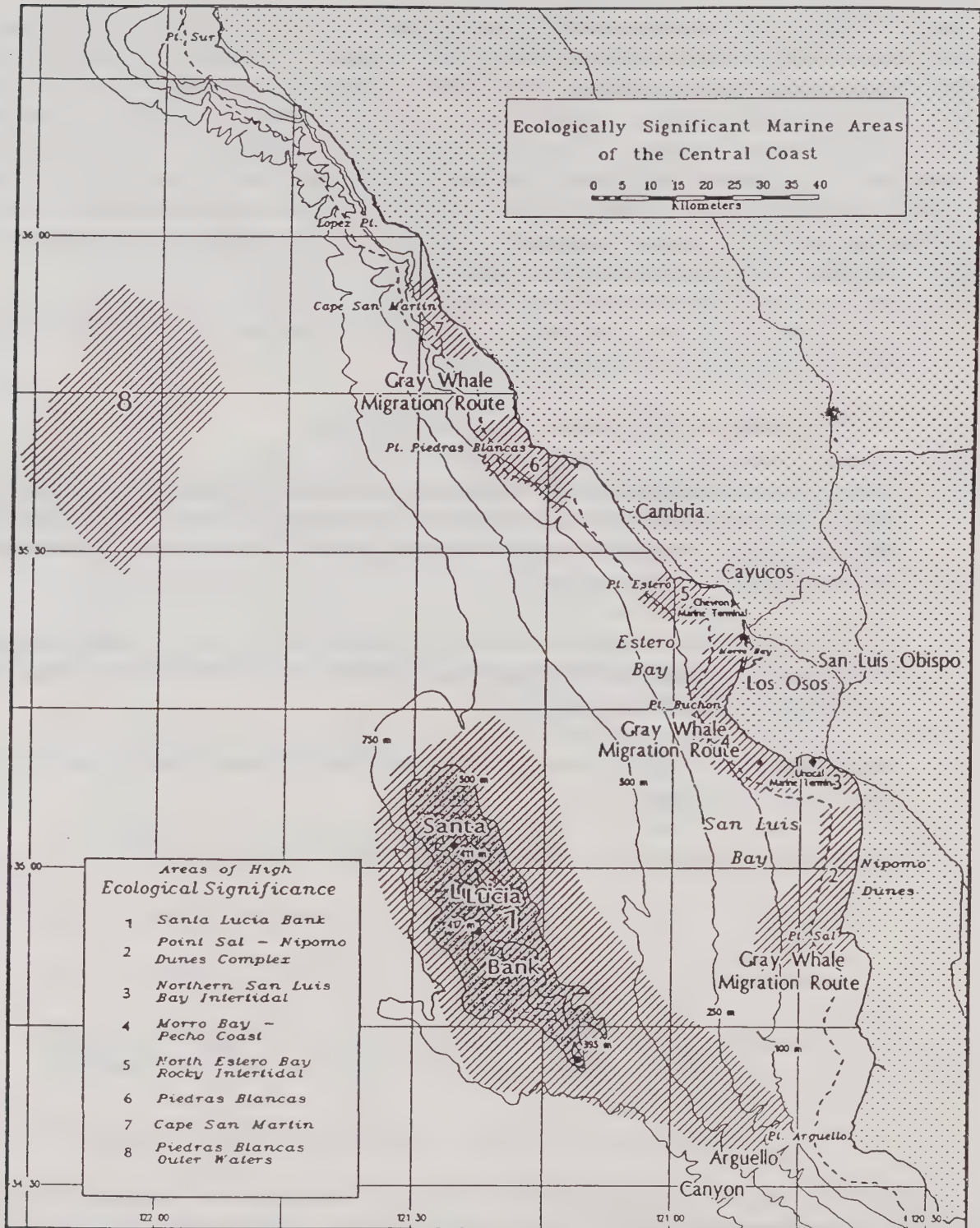
OSP 32: Protection of Significant Marine Resources.

- **The county shall make every effort to secure permanent protection and management of the county's significant marine resources using the National Marine Sanctuary, National Estuary and other programs and legislation as vehicles for protection and management.**
- **A national marine sanctuary should be established to protect and manage the ecologically and economically significant marine resources of the central coast, including those shown in Figure 6-4.**

Implementation: Through measures specified in the Offshore Energy Element and the Local Coastal Program.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

FIGURE 6-4: ECOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS



Source: Proposed Central Coast National Marine Sanctuary

Protection of Archaeological, Cultural and Historic Resources

OSP 33: Protection of Archaeological and Cultural Resources.

- **Protect archaeologically and culturally-sensitive sites from the effects of development by giving highest priority to avoiding disturbance of such sites. If sensitive sites can not be avoided, mitigate the impact of development. As a last resort, the use of fill to cap sites or recovery of resources may be permitted.**
- **Protect sensitive sites from vandalism and unauthorized collection of artifacts by educating the public about the importance of such sites and admonishing or prosecuting violators.**

OSP 34: Identification and Acquisition of Archaeologically and Culturally Sensitive Sites.

- **In consultation with native Americans and archaeological and conservation organizations, identify the most significant archaeological and cultural sites that should be acquired.**
- **Encourage acquisition by the county, public agencies or conservation organization of the most important archaeological and cultural sites from willing sellers and develop innovative ways to fund such acquisition.**

OSP 35: Protection of Historic Resources.

- **Protect the character of significant historic features and settings (more detailed recommendations for historic resources are included in the Historic Element, Environment Plan).**

Discussion: The purpose of the preceding policies is to recognize the importance of and protect our valuable archaeological, cultural and historic resources. Such resources, particularly those relating to Native Americans, are an important part of the history and heritage of this county. To Native Americans like the Chumash, special places such as Whales Cave near Avila Beach and Diablo Canyon are where they practice religion and learn about their history. Those places have special cultural significance. They are cultural resources that include sacred sites where prayer and spiritual ceremonies have been performed over hundreds and thousands of years. To Native Americans, such places represent their link with the past and are essential to their identity and culture.

Native American peoples are known to have occupied our county dating back at least 9,000 years ago. The Chumash, Salinan and Yokut lived in this area. Unfortunately, many significant archaeological and cultural sites have been destroyed. Urbanization and uncontrolled public access appear to be the principal sources of destruction. Acquisition

of important sites is desirable, but funds are difficult to obtain for that purpose. Therefore, the application of special standards for the review of development can be the most effective way to protect archaeological and cultural resources, as well as historic sites. Educating the public can also help protect these resources by increasing awareness and appreciation of their importance.

Implementation: The following measures implement the preceding policies regarding protection of archaeological and cultural resources:

1. The Planning and Building Department should prepare proposed amendments to the LUO and CZLUO to place the maximum emphasis on designing development to avoid archaeologically and culturally sensitive resources; for example, through the use of cluster development and land divisions. As a last resort, the use of fill to "cap" sensitive sites or the recovery of archaeological resources may be permitted.
2. The Planning and Building Department should prepare proposed amendments to the LUO and the CZLUO so that culturally sensitive resources are given similar protection to archaeological resources.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

Protection of Scenic Resources

The following factors should be considered when evaluating an area for the presence of visually unique or outstanding features of the landscape. Visually unique or outstanding features should consist of two or more of the following characteristics as viewed from public places, such as a street, highway, park, or the coastline:

- Varied topographic features including uniquely shaped rocks, dominant hills, mountains, or canyons.
- Vegetative features including significant stands of trees, colorful variety of wildflowers or plants.
- Water features including views of the Pacific Ocean, estuaries, lakes, creeks, or streams.
- Historic buildings or districts which characterize period architecture or are indicative of past lifestyles.
- Convenient visual access from a State highway, county roadway, bikeway, trail, park, or beach.
- Features which remain in view of the traveling public for a reasonable length of time for lasting views or impressions.

Many roads and highways have particular scenic attributes that contribute to the pleasure of traveling on them. Those scenic features play an important role in identifying the county as a special place. In addition, protection of the county's scenic environment encourages the growth of the recreation and tourist industries, which are important to the local economy. The county's scenic roads and highways should be protected and enhanced, but undue restrictions should not be placed on private property, including agricultural operations. Currently, only Nacimiento Lake Drive (G-14) is an officially designated scenic highway recognized by the State.

This plan identifies scenic roads and highways where scenic qualities should be protected through special development standards within corridors and viewsheds to be identified through future studies. In many instances, the road corridor may be quite expansive with the scenic qualities defined and bounded by distant features and backdrops. In other cases, a corridor may be narrow and offer very little in the way of distant views. However, both circumstances are important since they contribute to the high visual quality of this county. **OSP 38** contains a list of scenic roads and highways that should be studied to determine if and where scenic corridors and viewsheds should be located.

This plan does not propose to initiate establishment of any new Sensitive Resource Area combining designations in the LUE for the purpose of protecting scenic resources. Instead, design standards should be established in the LUO and/or LUE area plans in order to protect the scenic areas described or shown on generalized maps in this plan.

OSP 36: Scenic Resources - General.

- **Protect areas that have visually unique or outstanding features as described in the preceding list of factors.**

OSP 37: Development and Land Divisions within Scenic Areas.

- **Development within areas that have visually unique or outstanding scenic features shall protect scenic vistas from public view corridors as follows:**
 - As the highest priority: a) locate structures, access roads and grading on the portions of a site that are outside of the identified scenic resource or the least visible and b) locate structures below prominent ridgelines and hilltops so they are not silhouetted against the sky. Take into account the property owner's desire to enjoy scenic vistas from the site.
 - In prominent locations, locate development and grading (including that for access roads) on slopes that are 20 percent or less, unless there is no practicable alternative.

- Minimize vegetation removal and landform alterations such as the height and extent of cut and fill slopes, especially in prominent locations. Avoid locating fuel breaks on prominent slopes.
- New public facilities shall be developed in a way that limits disruption of the landscape to an absolute minimum.
- Use natural landforms and existing vegetation to screen development. Where that cannot be done, screen development with vegetation to be planted, preferably native vegetation, that is compatible with the scenic resource being protected. Vegetation screening shall not obstruct major public vistas.
- In prominent locations, design structures with low profiles and subdued colors that blend with the natural landscape.
- Locate utility lines to minimize their visibility from public view corridors where feasible.
- Locate signs, especially freestanding signs, so that they do not interfere with vistas from public view corridors.
- Encourage the use of cluster land divisions to carry out the preceding measures.

OSP 38: Scenic Roads and Highways.

- **Protect scenic vistas from scenic roads and highways. Study the following scenic roads and highways to determine if and where scenic corridors should be located:**
 - Highway 101
 - Highway 1 between San Luis Obispo and Monterey County
 - Highway 46 West
 - Highway 41 between Morro Bay and Atascadero
 - Highway 58 from the Santa Margarita urban reserve line to the Carrizo Plain
 - Palo Prieta Cholame Road/Bitterwater Road/Soda Lake Road from Cholame to the California Valley
 - Soda Lake Road from the California Valley to the San Luis Obispo County/Kern County line.
 - Elkhorn Road/Elkhorn Grade Road in the Carrizo Plain
 - Nacimiento Lake Drive and Road/Interlake Road from Paso Robles to Monterey County
 - Chimney Rock Road
 - Adelaida Road
 - Santa Rosa Creek Road
 - Cypress Mountain Drive from Santa Rosa Creek Road to Chimney Rock Road

- Pozo Road between Hi Mountain Road and Highway 58
- Hi Mountain Road
- Avila Beach Drive
- Perfumo Canyon Road/See Canyon Road
- Orcutt Road from the southern San Luis Obispo city limits to Lopez Drive
- Foothill Road
- Los Osos Valley Road between Foothill Road and Turri Road
- Price Canyon Road
- South Bay Boulevard from Santa Ysabel Avenue to Highway 1

Implementation: The preceding policies for protection of scenic resources are to be implemented as follows:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare a proposed priority list and work program for consideration by the Board of Supervisors to conduct corridor studies to identify areas that are consistent with the preceding factors so they may be evaluated for the presence of visually unique or outstanding features. Identification of such areas shall: a) specify the features that need to be protected, b) state why it is important to protect those features and c) where applicable, establish specific boundaries that define the minimum area necessary to protect the identified features.

Timeframe: Work program - 12 months from plan adoption; corridor studies ongoing based on work program.

2. The county, or applicable public agency, should use extensive landscaping to screen existing, unsightly public facilities (such as sewage treatment plants, maintenance yards and landfills) from scenic corridors.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

3. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the LUO or the applicable LUE area plans to establish development and design standards to implement the preceding policies for protection of scenic resources (see Appendix A for an example of such standards). Tailor such standards to the characteristics of a particular area. Within identified scenic corridors along scenic roads or highways, consider establishing design criteria for landscaping, lighting, fencing, signs (especially freestanding signs), scenic outlooks, and other features where appropriate.

Timeframe: Ongoing, based on item #1 above.

Hazard Areas

Hazard Areas are lands that need to be set aside or regulated in order to protect public health, safety and welfare. Hazard Areas include lands subject to flood, fire, geologic, and seismic (earthquake) risks. These areas are mapped on the Open Space Lands map in this plan and correspond to areas included in the Flood Hazard and Geologic Study Area combining designations in the LUE and the high and very high fire hazard areas in the Safety Element. Hazard Areas can also include man-made facilities such as pipelines, landfills, levees, stormwater retention areas, and surface mines.

Development in Hazard Areas can threaten the public health and safety of not only the development itself, but also other development in the vicinity such as areas that are downstream or downslope. Such development can also increase costs to the community to pay for property and other damage in the event of disasters such as floods, fires, landslides, and earthquakes, for example.

At the same time, areas subject to hazards can provide valuable open space for wildlife habitat, watershed protection, scenic viewsheds, recreation, and agriculture. For example, areas subject to flooding usually consist of streams and riparian vegetation. Such areas provide valuable habitat, high aesthetic quality, potential recreational opportunities, and the other benefits previously discussed in this plan (see the discussion of Streams and Riparian Vegetation in the section titled Conservation of Ecosystems and Environmentally Sensitive Resources). Man-made facilities that create hazardous situations for certain kinds of development can also provide open space opportunities. For example, utility corridors and levees can be used for pedestrian and bicycle trails. Stormwater retention areas, closed landfills and reclaimed surface mines can be used for parks and recreation areas.

The LUO includes existing standards that protect public health and safety and the hazardous resources themselves when development is proposed within areas subject to flood, geologic, seismic, or fire hazards. Also, the LCP includes policies, standards and ordinances regarding coastal hazards.

The purpose of the following policies is to protect public health, safety and welfare while encouraging the use of hazardous areas for open space purposes.

OSP 39: Natural Hazards.

- **Encourage open space use of areas subject to flood, geologic, seismic, or fire hazards.**

OSP 40: Man-Made Hazards.

- **Encourage recreational uses such as trails and parks where appropriate on facilities such as pipeline and other utility line corridors, stormwater retention basins, levees, closed landfills, and reclaimed surface mines.**

OSP 41: Development in Hazard Areas.

- **As the first priority, avoid development in areas subject to hazards. If there are no practicable alternatives, limit the intensity of use and/or include measure in the project design to avoid hazards to the development itself and to other properties in the vicinity.**
- **Encourage the use of cluster land divisions and development in order to avoid development on portions of property subject to hazards (see OSP 8).**

Implementation:

1. Complete an update of the Safety Element and Seismic Safety Element consistent with the latest State planning law requirements.
2. The Planning and Building Department should prepare proposed amendments to applicable sections of the LUO and CZLUO to implement the preceding policies and reflect the general plan update in item #1.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

Discouraging Premature, Unnecessary Land Use Conversion and Protecting Rural Character

The purpose of the following policies is to discourage premature and unnecessary conversion of agricultural, rural and open space lands to urban and suburban uses by establishing strict and specific criteria for when such conversion of land uses may be appropriate.

Conversion of Land Uses

OSP 42: Conversion of Agricultural Land.

- **Stabilize agricultural lands at the urban fringes. Do not approve general plan amendments to change agricultural land use designations in this plan and in the LUE to other land use designations unless the following criteria are met. Comply with the following applicable policies for the proposed new land use designation.**

General

- Either a) the land does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the Agriculture designation (see Appendix C); b) agricultural production is not feasible due to some physical constraint (such as soil infertility, lack of water or disease) or due to adjacent incompatible land uses, and other land in the general vicinity having the requested land use designation is already substantially developed; or c) the Board of Supervisors determines that there is an overriding public need for essential public facilities or services.
- The conversion shall not adversely affect existing or potential agricultural production of surrounding lands designated Agriculture or existing agricultural production on other lands. The effect on groundwater resources shall be considered (see AGP 12). An exception to this policy may be made if the Board of Supervisors determines that there is an overriding public need for essential public facilities or services.
- Where contiguous to an urban or village reserve line, conversion that meets these policies shall be to Urban Lands in accordance with OSP 45.
- Where land qualifies for conversion, give highest priority to retaining row crop terrain and soils, followed by specialty crops and forage lands, dry farm lands, and rangelands for grazing.

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to protect agricultural land, especially at the urban fringe, by strictly limiting conversion to other land uses. This is accomplished by establishing specific and strict guidelines for evaluating proposals to convert agricultural lands to non-agricultural designations under this plan and the LUE. Agricultural land at the urban fringe can be protected by maintaining parcels in sizes of at least 10-20 acres until such time as conversion to urban uses is appropriate.

Since the time the LUE was adopted in 1980, approximately 2,800 acres of land have been rezoned from the Agriculture category to Residential Rural and other non-agricultural land use categories (other than Rural Lands). Such conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses has the potential to seriously erode the long-term protection of agricultural resources. Agricultural land may be converted to other uses for a variety of reasons, including the following: urban growth pressures, rising land values and speculation, competition between urban and agricultural uses, the desirability of large-lot rural homesites, subdivision of agricultural properties into parcels too small to sustain agricultural uses, piecemeal LUE amendments to non-agricultural land use categories, and a lack of policies that clearly define under what circumstances agricultural lands may be converted to other designations.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare amendments to the Framework for Planning of the LUE that reference the preceding criteria in the guidelines for general plan amendments and revise the purpose and character statements for the Agriculture category so they are consistent with the preceding criteria.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

2. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) should develop standards, criteria and procedures consistent with this plan which will be used in making decisions that would lead to conversion of agricultural lands.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

3. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare amendments to the LUE by changing the land use category of lands designated in this plan as Agriculture to Agriculture.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

4. Refer proposed general plan amendment requests (both through separate applications and through an area plan update) to the County Department of Agriculture.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

OSP 43: Conversion to Small-Lot Rural (Residential Rural).

- **In order to maintain a hard edge at the urban edge, avoid the creation of new Small-Lot Rural designations or Residential Rural LUE land use categories in rural areas, unless the land is non-prime land and consists of separately-owned parcels that are less than 20 acres. Otherwise, conversion may occur only if all of the following criteria are met.**
 - Resources that support the proposed type and density of development shall be available or shall be provided as a condition of development.
 - Either a) an LUE planning area standard shall be established with the requested general plan amendment to require a minimum parcel size or equivalent density of 10-20 acres or b) the land is a designated receiving area as part of a TDC program (see AGP 17).

- The conversion shall not adversely affect existing or potential agricultural production of surrounding lands designated Agriculture or existing agricultural production on other lands. The effect on groundwater resources shall be considered (see AGP 12).
- Where contiguous to an urban or village reserve line, conversion that meets these policies shall be to Urban Lands in accordance with **OSP 44**.

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to discourage urban sprawl by preventing "leapfrog" development and by maintaining a hard edge or clear distinction between urban/village and rural areas. In rural areas, parcels should be at least ten to 20 acres in size (except in cluster subdivisions where the overall density would be equivalent but the lot sizes may be smaller than ten to 20 acres). Accordingly, this policy limits the establishment of new Small-Lot Rural and Residential Rural designations outside of urban and village reserve lines. That will also provide maximum flexibility and options in planning for future orderly urban growth.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the Framework for Planning of the LUE by referencing the preceding land conversion criteria in the guidelines for general plan amendments.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

2. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the Framework for Planning of the LUE by revising the purpose and character statements for the Residential Suburban and Residential Rural land use categories to limit the establishment of those categories in rural areas as stated in this policy.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

3. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the purpose and character statements for the Rural Lands land use category in Framework for Planning of the LUE to state that the Rural Lands category is also applied near urban and village areas in order to maintain a clear distinction between urban/village and rural areas and to provide maximum flexibility and options in planning for future orderly urban growth.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

4. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the LUE by changing the land use category of lands designated in this plan as Large-Lot Rural to Rural Lands or other appropriate, corresponding LUE land use category shown in Table 1.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

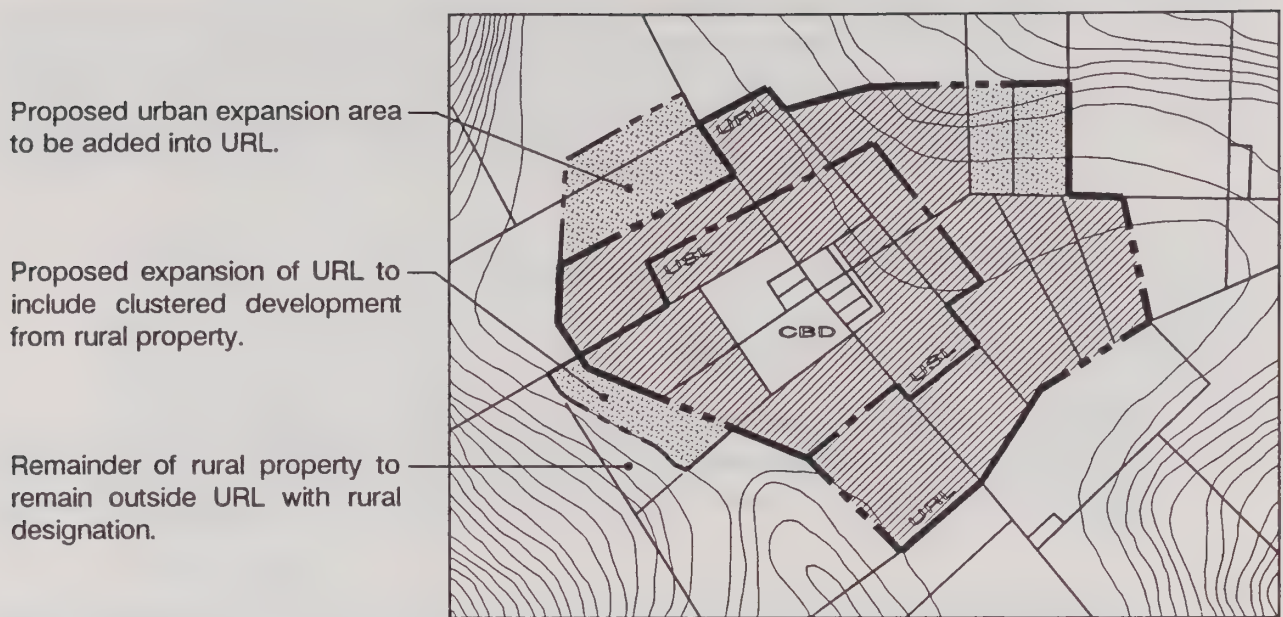
5. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the LUE by changing the land use category of lands designated in this plan as Small-Lot Rural to Residential Rural, except for lands in the Residential Suburban land use category. Where a Residential Rural category is established, amend the applicable LUE area plan to establish a minimum parcel size of at least 10-20 acres.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

OSP 44: Conversion to Urban Lands.

- **Do not expand existing urban or village areas (Urban Lands) until such areas are largely built-out, or additional land is needed to accommodate necessary uses or services that cannot otherwise be accommodated within the existing urban or village area:**
- **Expand urban or village areas only where contiguous to an existing urban/village reserve line as shown in Figure 6-5, unless an entirely new urban or village area is needed in order to direct growth and protect the surrounding agricultural lands and rural character.**
- **Urban development shall be annexed to an incorporated city or an existing community services district/county service area. Such annexation shall occur only where clustered development from rural property is to be located adjacent to the urban area or where and when higher density development is to occur and where consistent with resource and service capabilities and orderly extension of urban services.**
- **The conversion shall not adversely affect existing or potential agricultural production of surrounding lands designated Agriculture or existing agricultural production on other lands. The effect on groundwater resources shall be considered (see AGP 12).**
- **Within urban and village reserve lines, maintain large parcels, preferably at least 10 acres in size, until such time as full urban services can be provided.**

FIGURE 6-5: ORDERLY URBAN EXPANSION



Discussion:

The purpose of this policy is to provide for appropriate and orderly expansion and development of urban and village areas. This policy allows maximum flexibility and options in planning for future urban land uses, circulation and extension of services and utilities.

After existing urban and village areas are largely built-out, urban expansion may occur. Urban expansion should be directed to areas that are: outside of and adjacent to existing urban and village areas, needed for orderly community growth, not important for agricultural purposes, and not needed for retention in low density rural uses. In those areas, sufficient resources (i.e., water supply, sewage treatment capacity, etc.) must be available or be provided to support urban expansion. In order to provide urban services efficiently, the land needs to be annexed to a city, community services district or a county services area. Directing urban expansion in that manner will promote development of compact communities and help avoid urban sprawl. Once an area is included within an urban or village reserve line, parcel sizes should be kept as large as possible until the ultimate intensity of development can be achieved. By doing so, a range of options will be available for development and it will be more likely that full urban development will occur where it is most appropriate. That will also help avoid urban sprawl.

This policy also allows for creation of new urban or village areas. The Rural Settlement Patterns Strategy study that is currently underway is evaluating whether "new towns" are needed in order to direct growth to appropriate areas, thereby protecting agricultural and other important resources. Development of new towns in appropriate areas could help prevent urban sprawl and protect agricultural and environmentally sensitive resources - key goals of this plan.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare proposed amendments to the Framework for Planning of the LUE to reference this policy in the guidelines for evaluating general plan amendments.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

2. Upon completion of the Rural Settlement Pattern Strategy Study, consider further amendments to policies for conversion of rural lands to urban and village land uses.

Timeframe: 12 months from completion of Rural Settlement Pattern Strategy Study.

Protecting Rural Character.

OSP 45: Community Separators.

- **Establish and maintain permanent separators between communities along road corridors.**
- **Community separators shall consist primarily of the following lands and uses: agriculture, open space, passive recreation, limited active recreation, and very low density residential development (20-acre parcels or equivalent density). Scattered higher density clusters or pockets of development are allowable where they recognize existing lot sizes and zoning patterns.**

Discussion: One of the general goals of the Land Use Element is to maintain a distinction between urban and rural development by providing for rural, low-intensity uses outside of urban and village areas. The purpose of that goal is to preserve and enhance the pattern of identifiable communities that is characteristic of the county. The open areas that surround many of the county's urban areas and communities provide visual relief from continuous urbanization. They help create the identity of each community and the distinct character of the landscape that is enjoyed by the county's residents and visitors.

Maintaining permanent separations between communities also prevents premature development in rural areas and urban sprawl. Such development not only consumes agricultural and open space lands, but also increases the costs of extending and providing necessary public services to those areas. That results in increased costs to county taxpayers.

Maintaining permanent separations between urban areas can benefit agriculture by controlling urban sprawl. That can reduce the demand for rural homesites and reduce conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses and reduce pressure for speculative investment in agricultural lands. Such pressure can make the purchase of land too expensive to justify agricultural production. In addition, maintaining permanent separations between communities can assure agriculturalists that urbanization will not eventually consume their agricultural land. That may encourage investments in farming operations that are needed to improve the chances for economically viable operations in the long-run.

Several areas of the county are vulnerable to having the separations between communities encroached upon or eliminated. Such areas are close to developed areas and have access from major roads. One particularly vulnerable area is along the Highway 101 corridor in the North County where several communities are in close proximity to one another. If the existing separations between those communities are lost, the result would be a linear urban area extending from Santa Margarita to San Miguel. The individual identity of each community would be compromised, causing a significant loss of one of the characteristics that makes this county a special place.

Community separators are identified conceptually in Figure 6-6. They are intended to maintain a distinction between urban/village areas and rural areas, maintain separation between communities and limit corridor-style urbanization and urban sprawl. Community separators should be located as follows:

- Between the urban reserve lines or village reserve lines of communities or cities;
- Along major road corridors in a manner that maintains visual separation between communities;
- In areas characterized by the following uses: agriculture, open space, passive recreation, active recreation where it does not diminish the rural and visual character of the areas, or very low density residential development (minimum 20-acre parcels or equivalent density, with some pockets of higher-density development allowable where they recognize existing lot sizes and zoning patterns);
- In a manner that does not preclude reasonable urban expansion.

Implementation: The following apply to and within community separators:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should prepare a proposed work program for approval by the Board of Supervisors establishing the priority and funding for completion of special studies to identify the precise boundaries of community separators through special studies in coordination with affected cities.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

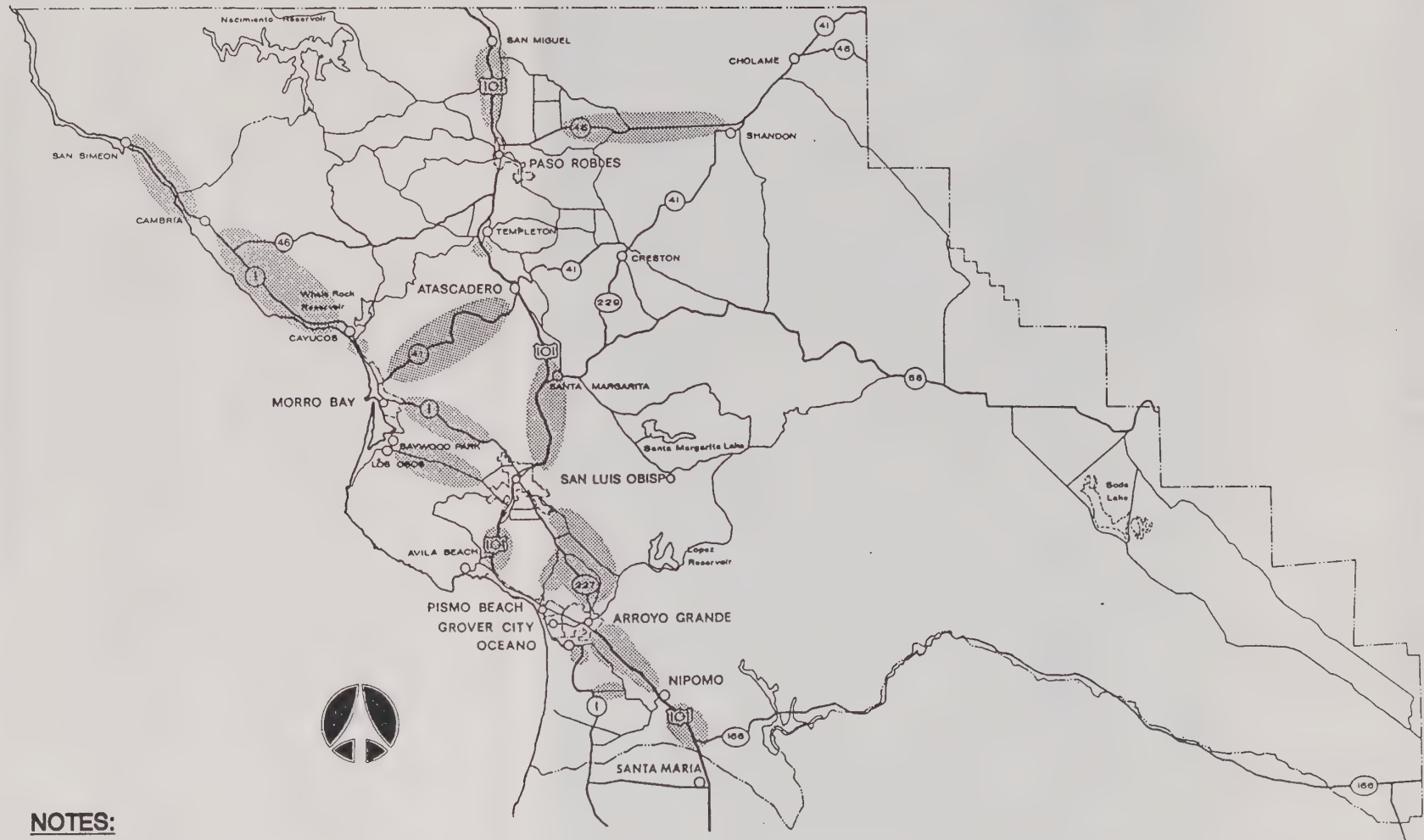
2. Prepare amendments to applicable LUE area plans to identify community separators and establish special planning area standards to carry out this policy, along with appropriate amendments to the LUO. The amendments should consider the following options:
 - a. Prepare amendments to the LUE to change the land use categories to Agriculture, Rural Lands, Recreation, or Open Space consistent with this plan, except where existing parcels are predominantly less than 20 acres and developed. As an alternative, change the land use categories and/or applicable planning area standards to allow small scattered pockets of clustered residential development with large intervening areas of permanent open space where consistent with this plan.
 - b. Amend the LUE by establishing or amending planning area standards to limit allowable uses for new development consistent with this policy.
 - c. Amend the LUO to use cluster land divisions where proposed parcels are smaller than 20 acres.
 - d. Encourage lot line adjustments among existing parcels smaller than 20 acres in size in order to cluster development on small parcels adjacent to urban and village areas and create large permanent open space parcels to enhance community separators.
 - e. Encourage transfer of development credits from existing small parcels into urban areas (see AGP 17).
 - f. Assist conservation organizations in developing and implementing programs to preserve agricultural land and open space and make the agricultural community aware of the advantages of participating in such programs. Consider establishing a program to preserve agricultural lands by purchasing development rights and conservation easements from willing sellers and by cooperating with other jurisdictions' programs (see AGP 18).

- g. Amend the LUE by establishing planning area standards where appropriate in order to reduce visual impacts (see OSP 38 and 39 regarding scenic roads and highways and development within scenic areas).

Timeframe: As specified in approved work program.



FIGURE 6-6: COMMUNITY SEPARATORS



NOTES:

1. The locations of the community separators are conceptual only. They are not intended to indicate property-specific boundaries. Instead, they show a generalized vicinity where certain implementation measures are to be taken in the future to maintain separations between communities. The precise boundaries of these community separators will be determined after subsequent site-specific studies and amendments to the Land Use Element.
2. Community separators are not intended to change the status of existing development or future development projects specified in LUE or LCP planning area standards.



CHAPTER 7: AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

Agriculture is one of the county's key industries. In 1992, agriculture contributed about \$825,000,000 to the county's economy¹. Maintaining the health of the agricultural industry in this county is vital to our economy and to our ability to help feed ourselves, the nation and the world. Maintaining a healthy agricultural industry is also essential in order to preserve our rural and agricultural character and heritage.

At first look, it may not seem that there are many issues regarding the protection of agricultural land in this county. After all, grazing and cropland uses occur on about 60 percent of the total county land area or about 75 percent of the privately-owned land in the county. Furthermore, approximately 761,000 acres of land are under land conservation contracts -- more than 50 percent of the agricultural land in the county.

Some existing county policies are intended to protect lands for agricultural production and direct intensive development to urban areas. For example, village and urban reserve lines define long-term edges between urban development and the surrounding countryside. The Agriculture category (zone) is applied to all lands within agricultural preserves and to other lands deemed suitable for agriculture. Subdivision of agricultural lands is based on existing agricultural uses or the quality of soils on a property.

Nevertheless, existing policies do not appear to be sufficient to protect agricultural lands. The Farm Bureau, Agricultural Commissioner and various community groups have expressed concern that existing county policies do not adequately protect agricultural land and the agricultural industry.

Many issues need to be addressed in order to help assure the continued health of the agriculture industry in this county. The following are examples:

- The county's agriculture industry is constantly changing and evolving. In the arid eastern portions of the county, more traditional land uses prevail. Other areas closer to the coast are being affected by population growth and a trend towards more intensive agricultural uses, particularly in areas with access to water to support irrigation. In addition, approximately 100,000 acres of land have been removed from production as part of the federal conservation reserve program.
- The county's moderate year-round climate, quality educational facilities and other amenities create a desirable environment that draws people to the area. The resulting population growth can create pressure for speculative investment in land and conversion

¹ According to the County Department of Agriculture 1992 Annual Report

of agricultural land to urban, rural residential and other non-agricultural uses, especially at the edges of existing communities.

- Rural areas are being subdivided (as allowed by current criteria in the LUE/LUO) into sizes that are being questioned in terms of their ability to support sustainable agricultural production.
- A large number of parcels within rural subdivisions as well as other parcels of record are too small to support most commercial agricultural uses if individually sold as rural homesites. There are approximately 2,750 parcels totaling about 16,700 acres throughout the county within the Agriculture category that are smaller than 20 acres. Of these parcels, approximately 2,100 totaling about 6,200 acres are 10 acres or less in size.
- Many home buyers seek small acreage in rural areas. These buyers are willing to pay prices for rural homesites that are many times greater than what the land is worth for agricultural purposes. When farmland is parceled into rural homesites, the market value of that land increases measurably. That puts pressure on adjoining or nearby lands to be converted to non-agricultural uses. However, those landowners who choose not to convert are affected by the higher selling prices of the converted lands because increased land values result in higher property, gift and inheritance taxes.
- As families increase in size, differences among heirs frequently force the sale or parceling of family farms. Since much county ranch land provides a desirable place to live, the pressure for parceling these holdings among heirs may be greater here than elsewhere.
- Many of the better agricultural lands are located near urban areas.
- As the density of population in the urban areas that abut agricultural operations increases, conflicts can arise between farmers and urban dwellers. Similar conflicts can occur where rural homesites are near agricultural operations. These situations can create problems for farmers and ranchers who are continuing routine agricultural practices that produce noise, dust or other annoyances for non-agricultural residents.
- As the county's population increases in urban and rural areas, pressure also builds for recreational uses -- golf courses, trails, parks -- which may conflict with agricultural uses.
- Water is becoming an increasingly scarce resource. As a result, there is more competition for groundwater between agricultural and urban uses.
- The local agricultural economy is affected by many factors, including farm debt, low farm commodity prices due to farm surpluses, increasing competition in world markets, and increasing operational costs. Farmers and ranchers have been adversely affected by

by increasing costs for land, energy, and water, as well as ever higher costs for borrowing money to finance agricultural operations.

- Even though much of the county's agricultural land is subject to land conservation contracts, many of the older contracts may not adequately protect agricultural land. For example, the original Edna Valley, Nipomo Valley and Estrella agricultural preserves, and part of the Shandon preserve have a minimum parcel size of 40-acres. The original Adelaide agricultural preserve has a minimum parcel size of 80-acres. Those parcel sizes may be too small for the properties to sustain most long-term agricultural operations. Moreover, early contracts do not prohibit separate sale of existing parcels of record that are smaller than the agricultural preserve minimum parcel sizes. The result could be the sale of individually-owned parcels in agricultural areas that are too small for sustained, long-term agriculture. Those parcels will then be used primarily for residential purposes, resulting in some of the preceding problems.

The preceding trends may cause the county's agricultural land base to be diminished, its urban areas to sprawl into the countryside and its best agricultural lands to be lost. As a result, a major sector of the county's economy could be seriously weakened.

In contrast, effectively protecting agriculture provides significant benefits as a productive use of land which otherwise would either lie vacant, serve as sites for scattered residential use or serve only as a medium for speculative investment. By maintaining land in agriculture, the county gains productive use of land that requires a minimum level of county services, as well as keeping future options open.

Clearly, there is no single solution to such a wide range of problems and issues. Nor are the solutions only local ones. Many problems associated with agriculture may only be resolved through policies at the state or national level. However, the county must define its own agricultural land use policies in order to protect agricultural land resources. For if the critical land resources are lost, the effect is irreversible and our important agriculture industry will be a thing of the past. Therefore, this document has been drafted in an attempt to identify and protect productive agricultural lands, help stabilize land values, avoid premature and haphazard conversion of agricultural lands, and enhance the quality of life for the residents of this county.



CHAPTER 8: AGRICULTURAL LAND

The most precious agricultural resource is the land and its soils. Also essential are the water resources and the climate that shapes and nourishes the land. The following is a general description of the main types of agricultural land and how it is used in this county. These descriptions form the basis for the system used to determine which lands should be designated Agriculture in this plan. A detailed description of agricultural land and an explanation of the criteria used in mapping land in the Agriculture designation is contained in Appendix C. A general discussion of agricultural land and discussions of the agricultural industry and economy are contained in Appendix F.

Irrigated Lands

Row Crops Terrain and Soils.

These areas support the most intensive farming. The farming operations involve labor- extensive use of equipment and chemicals and much vehicle traffic. They are often close to populated areas. Partly because of that, these areas need special recognition to assure that farming will continue.

Row crop terrain and soils are characterized by agricultural uses such as various types of vegetables, seed crops, orchards, and other irrigated specialty crops. In valley bottom lands, uses include irrigated field crops and other irrigated specialty crops. Property sizes generally range from 10 acres to hundreds of acres.

The topography consists of nearly level valley bottom lands. The soils are mainly in land capability Classes I and II, but may include some Class III land that has been traditionally used or is currently used for row crop production (the U.S. Soil Conservation Service land capability rating of soils from Class I through VIII generally reflects the quality of soils for various agricultural uses).

Specialty Crops and Forage Lands.

These areas are characterized by irrigated orchards and vineyards such as wine grapes, avocados, citrus, and apples. Irrigated uses such as alfalfa and pasture may be found in these areas where the land is also suitable for irrigated orchards and vineyards. Property sizes generally range from 20 acres to a few hundred acres.

The topography is gently rolling and rolling on slopes between 5 and 30 percent. The soils consist mainly of Land Capability Classes III and IV.



Dry Farm Lands

Dry farm lands cover a broad range of properties that are primarily cultivated for an annual crop, but also include some orchard operations. Parcels are normally large in order to be productive units. Farming activities are seasonal. Dry farm lands are divided into two types of croplands, mixed croplands and dry croplands.

Mixed Croplands.

Mixed croplands consist of two different types of terrain and crops. One type of mixed cropland is found in valleys with good soils but insufficient water for major irrigated uses. Such areas are characterized by mixed agricultural uses such as scattered irrigated crops and dry farm grain and hay. The other type of mixed cropland is found in areas of higher than average rainfall such as the easterly slopes of the Santa Lucia Range where dry farm orchards and some vineyards occur.

Mixed croplands are characterized by dry farm orchards and vineyards and specialty or high value field crops such as almonds and walnuts. Property sizes generally range from 40 acres to several hundred acres.

The topography ranges from flat to rolling on slopes between 0 and 30 percent. The soils consist mainly of Land Capability Classes III and IV.

Dry Croplands.

These areas are characterized by grain and hay production that is widespread in the northeastern part of the county. Barley, wheat and oat hay are the principal crops. Other crops include dry beans and safflower. Dry croplands may include grain stubble fields and intervening non-cultivated areas that provide seasonal forage for livestock. Property sizes generally range from 80 acres to several thousand acres.

The topography is flat to rolling on slopes between 0 and 30 percent. The soils consist mainly of Land Capability Classes III and IV. Class VI land has also been commonly used for grain and hay production.



Rangelands for Grazing

Grazing lands account for a large percentage of privately-owned land in the county. Cattle ranching is the predominant use on these lands, where property sizes generally range from 100 acres to thousands of acres.

The topography is mainly rolling and steep on slopes between 30 and 75 percent. Rangelands may also include small intervening valleys and ridgetops that have limited use or potential as farmland. The soils consist mainly of Land Capability Classes IV, VI and VII, but also contain small intervening areas of other land capability classes.





CHAPTER 9: AGRICULTURAL GOALS AND POLICIES

Agricultural Goals

Agricultural Land Conservation.

- Maintain the agricultural land base of the county by clearly defining and designating productive agricultural areas for long-term protection.
- Establish criteria for when it is appropriate to convert from Agriculture to non-agricultural designations.
- Prioritize areas of agricultural productivity so that future conversion to non-agricultural designations may be considered when needed and where infrastructure and services are available.

Landowner Incentives to Preserve Agricultural Land.

- Provide incentives to encourage landowners to maintain land in productive agricultural uses.
- Maintaining and Strengthening the Agricultural Preserve Program.
- Maintain and strengthen the integrity of the county's agricultural preserve program as an effective means for long-term agricultural land preservation.

A primary goal of the Agriculture and Open Space Element is to designate stable, long-term areas of the county dominated by productive farms and ranches. This approach leaves a substantial area of non-agricultural or marginal agricultural land to be classified in non-agricultural designations.

The first three goals regarding agricultural land conservation express the need for several classifications of the land that was mostly designated as Agricultural Land and Multi-Use Open Space Land in the 1972 Open Space Element, and Agriculture and Rural Lands in the LUE. The land classification system established in this Agriculture and Open Space Element recognizes the need for urban expansion to occur on non-prime lands and to reclassify areas where rural residential development is occurring. These goals are implemented through the mapping system and various policies in this plan regarding agricultural land use, land division, water supplies, and conversion of land uses.

The goal regarding incentives to preserve agricultural land is addressed in many of the policies in this plan. For example, incentives for landowners to maintain land in agricultural use are provided for in the policies for both major and minor agricultural cluster projects. Those policies provide alternatives to conventional subdivision design that include a density bonus in return for keeping productive land in agricultural use.

The goal regarding the agricultural preserve program is addressed through a separate program parallel to the preparation of this plan. The Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 includes revised policies and procedures for implementing the agricultural preserve program.

The policies to attain the preceding goals are interrelated; consequently, they are addressed in the remainder of this chapter under the headings of agricultural land use, agricultural land division, and agricultural land preservation.



Agricultural Policies

The following policies apply to land designated Agriculture in this plan, unless otherwise specified.

Agricultural Land Use

The following policies emphasize protection of the most important agricultural resource -- the land -- for present and future agricultural production. At the same time, more flexibility is provided for the establishment of compatible agriculturally-related commercial and industrial uses. On the other hand, these policies limit the type, location and intensity of non-agricultural uses on agricultural lands. Other policies are intended to prevent land use conflicts, encourage soil conservation and protect agricultural water supplies.

Agricultural Policy (AGP)

AGP 1: Agricultural Use of Small Parcels.

- **Encourage the establishment of crop specialties and specialized animal facilities on existing small parcels.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage agricultural uses and discourage rural residences as the principal use on small parcels. This will make the best use of agricultural land and will help minimize conflicts with surrounding agricultural uses, which can adversely affect those operations.

Implementation: This policy is to be implemented through day-to-day public contact with persons who own or wish to purchase land to establish small-scale agricultural specialty uses. Agricultural organizations and agencies and the County Department of Planning and Building should advise existing and prospective owners of smaller properties of the benefits of locating crop specialties and specialized animal facilities in agricultural areas rather than rural residential areas where land is more expensive and land use conflicts are more likely to occur.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

THE FOLLOWING POLICIES 2, 3, 4, AND 5 ARE NOT INTENDED TO REPEAL ANY POLICIES, STANDARDS OR ORDINANCES OF THE LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM (LCP) AND THE FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES FOR POLICY NOS. 2, 3, 4, AND 5 ARE IN ADDITION TO ALL APPLICABLE LCP POLICIES, STANDARDS AND ORDINANCES:

AGP 2: Location of Uses and Facilities.

- **New buildings, roads and structures shall be located so as to protect agricultural land.**
- **Uses to be located on the best agricultural soils shall be those that are most directly related to agricultural production.**

Discussion: The first part of this policy is intended to ensure that the most productive land will be kept available for agricultural production. The second part of the policy deals with row crop terrain and soils, those areas characterized by prime agricultural land that can support the most intensive farming operations. On such land, allowable uses should generally be limited to those that are most directly related to agricultural production. Such limitations are found in existing inland LUE planning area standards that limit uses in the Arroyo Grande, Nipomo and Oso Flaco Valleys.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO to establish standards for projects requiring discretionary approval on irrigated lands or dry farm lands (as described in chapter 8) by either a) locating new buildings, structures and roads on a very limited portion of the total site area, or b) locating such improvements on the least productive portions of the property.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

2. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to Framework for Planning of the LUE and applicable planning area standards in the LUE area plans to limit allowable uses on row crop terrain and soils (as described in chapter 8) to those uses that are most directly related to agricultural production (see Appendix A for an example of allowable uses).

Timeframe: For Framework for Planning, 12 months from plan adoption. For LUE area plans, as part of area plan updates, or 18 months from plan adoption for area plans not scheduled for updating in that time frame.

AGP 3: Residential Density. (THIS SHALL NOT APPLY WITHIN THE COASTAL ZONE.)

- **Limit residential density to two primary dwellings on parcels of 20 acres or larger. On parcels of less than 20 acres, allow one primary and one secondary dwelling.**
- **Locate primary dwellings within 500 feet of each other, unless conditions justify otherwise.**

Discussion: Residential uses, notwithstanding their definition in the LUE as accessory uses in the Agriculture category, are leading to land use conflicts with agricultural operations. Allowing two primary residences in dispersed locations can reduce the amount of land available for agricultural production and can encourage parcelization around existing residences, which may also reduce agricultural potential. This policy helps to avoid those problems by continuing to allow two primary dwellings on parcels of 20 acres or larger, but requiring that the two dwellings be clustered together where appropriate.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO to require location of dwellings in accordance with this policy. Primary dwellings may be located more than 500 feet apart where authorized by a Minor Use Permit for reasons such as protecting public health or safety, avoiding or minimizing effects on sensitive resources, avoiding or minimizing adverse effects on the agricultural operation, providing better security for the farm operation, or other reasons that the land owner can show will be for the long-term benefit of agriculture on the property.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP 4: Retail Commercial Uses.

- **Allow limited retail commercial uses on agricultural land where the uses are accessory uses to a winery, tasting room, bed and breakfast facility, cultural or recreational use, or other similar use.**
- **Locate the accessory retail commercial uses on non-prime agricultural lands, unless the site is not conducive to sustained agricultural production. Locate the uses where land use compatibility, circulation capacity and infrastructure capacity exist or can be developed.**

Discussion. This policy recognizes the increasing need of farmers to diversify their on-site activities from production through the marketing of their agricultural products. On-site and area-specific promotion and marketing of local agricultural products can also enhance the county's tourist industry.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO and CZLUO to allow the following accessory uses to a winery, tasting room, bed and breakfast facility, cultural or recreational use, or other similar use in the Agriculture category: restaurants, other facilities which sell prepared foods and drinks for on-premise consumption, and food and beverage retail sales. The accessory uses shall be clearly incidental and secondary to the primary agricultural use of the site and shall comply with performance standards to be included in the LUO (see Appendix A for an example of ordinance standards).

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP 5: Service Commercial Uses.

- **Allow limited service commercial uses where needed to support local agricultural production.**
- **Locate such uses on non-prime agricultural lands, unless the site is not conducive to sustained agricultural production. Locate the uses where land use compatibility, circulation capacity and infrastructure capacity exist or can be developed.**

Discussion: Agricultural services should normally be located in service commercial or industrial areas. However, certain uses may need to be located within agricultural areas; for example, rental and farming services using heavy equipment and bulk supplies that cannot be transported easily between urban and rural areas, farm equipment repair services, and veterinary services. Locating needed small-scale services in agricultural areas can also provide farmers with a supplemental source of income. The purpose of this policy is to encourage such agricultural service uses, but at the same time establish standards to assure that such uses will be compatible with the surrounding agricultural area and not adversely affect agricultural production.

Most commercial services needed in agricultural areas are already allowed by the LUE and LUO. They are included in the land use definition of "Farm Equipment and Supplies," which includes the sale, rental and repair of agricultural machinery (excluding the sale of motorized, self-propelled machinery).

Implementation: Amend the LUO and the CZLUO to require that land use permit applications for uses included in the land use definition of "Farm Equipment and Supplies" (as defined in Framework for Planning of the LUE) comply with specified performance standards (see Appendix A for an example of ordinance standards).

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP 6: Intensive Agricultural Facilities.

- **Encourage the development of compatible intensive agricultural facilities that are directly related to agricultural production, processing, packing and support industries.**
- **Locate such agricultural facilities on non-prime agricultural lands, unless the site is not conducive to sustained agricultural production. Locate such facilities where land use compatibility, circulation capacity and infrastructure capacity exist or can be developed.**

Discussion: Intensive agricultural facilities include many different types of uses that have varied requirements as to location, site characteristics, water, sanitary service and waste disposal, as well as a variable degree of potential conflicts with residential and other urban land uses. Examples of such uses are livestock feedlots, dairies, hog farms, poultry operations, mushroom production, greenhouses, aquaculture facilities, feed and grain mills, meat-packing plants, other types of food processing plants, breweries, wineries, produce packing sheds, packing and packaging materials, ice manufacturing, agricultural chemical plants and storage facilities, and transportation facilities for agricultural products and supplies.

This policy recognizes that additional intensive agricultural facilities may be needed as agricultural uses are intensified. Finding suitable locations for such facilities where development will be compatible with surrounding uses is important to both agriculture and surrounding uses. Accordingly, the county should actively assist in finding appropriate locations in industrial or agricultural areas.

The LUE and LUO have appropriate standards for the location of such uses. However, one such type of use not referenced as an allowed use would be a brewery. Under existing county standards, wineries can be established using grapes grown on-site, or the grapes may be imported. Breweries could be similar in nature, where the products are either grown on-site or imported for the manufacturing of the finished product. The LUO standards establish the requirements for developing the facility by spelling out the level of permit required, how the site is to be developed, and the type of access required to the site, among other factors.

A review of the Standard Industrial Classification system (the national definition of land uses on which the county's definitions are based) shows that wineries, breweries, and the manufacturing of other types of spirits are included in the definition of Food and Kindred Products. Under the existing LUE/LUO, breweries are not even referenced as a use that could be established in this county, while wineries are listed under the definition of Agricultural Processing. The LUE/LUO should be amended to include breweries as an allowed use, and both wineries and breweries should be listed under the definition of Food and Kindred Products. This would result in both types of uses being appropriately listed with similar types of uses, and would allow both uses to be located in the

agricultural and rural areas of the county. At the same time, implementation of preceding AGP 2 will protect the most important croplands from being used for intensive agricultural facilities.

Implementation:

1. Available non-prime land suitable for intensive agricultural facilities shall be identified for individuals and agricultural firms. The county shall work cooperatively with individuals and agricultural firms seeking to establish compatible, intensive agricultural facilities directly related to agricultural production, processing, packing and support industries. If necessary, designate other suitable non-prime lands to meet location and service requirements for such facilities.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUE to include wineries and breweries in the definition of "Food and Kindred Products." The LUO should also be amended to incorporate appropriate development standards for breweries similar to wineries, including a provision that they shall be located on non-prime agricultural lands unless the site is not conducive to sustained agricultural production.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

3. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO by adding development standards for uses included in the land use definition of "Food and Kindred Products" (as defined in Framework for Planning) similar to those standards already in place for wineries that will ensure compatibility with the rural and agricultural character of the area.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP 7: Agricultural Buffers.

- **Protect land designated Agriculture and other land in agricultural use by using natural or man-made buffers where adjacent to non-agricultural land uses in accordance with the agricultural buffer policies adopted by the Board of Supervisors (see Appendix D).**

Discussion: New residential and other non-agricultural uses that are proposed adjacent to agricultural land or uses may result in land use conflicts with agricultural or potential agricultural uses. Such conflicts can be detrimental to agricultural uses, as well as other adjacent uses. Where appropriate, proposed non-agricultural uses must provide agricultural buffers as recommended by the County Department of Agriculture.

agricultural buffers as recommended by the County Department of Agriculture. Agricultural buffers help to promote and protect agriculture and protect public health and safety by minimizing potential land use conflicts.

Land use conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses vary considerably depending on the type or intensity of both uses. Most hazards and nuisances occur where residential uses are located adjacent to agricultural uses. Residential and other non-agricultural uses can be adversely affected by odors, noise, dust, and pesticide use. Farmers and ranchers are affected by resident complaints and lawsuits, pilferage of vegetables and fruits, increased incidence of trespass, theft and vandalism, disturbance of livestock by dogs and people, introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases harmful to agricultural uses, increased potential for fire on dry farm and grazing lands, and competition for available water resources.

The LUO contains a number of location and setback standards to separate existing residential areas and uses from potentially incompatible agricultural uses such as feedlots, poultry ranches or hog farms. In addition, the Board of Supervisors has adopted policies for establishing buffers between agricultural areas and non-agricultural development in order to minimize possible land use conflicts.

Implementation: The County Department of Agriculture shall review applications for land divisions, lot line adjustments and land use permits for consistency with the agricultural buffer policies adopted by the Board of Supervisors (see Appendix D).

Timeframe: Ongoing.

AGP 8: Right-to-Farm Ordinance.

- **The county should continue to support the existing Right-to-Farm Ordinance so as to let the public know that the use of real property for agricultural operations is a high priority and favored use.**

Discussion. Many purchasers of land in agricultural areas are initially attracted by the country environment. Only after they move into the agricultural area do they become aware of the intensity of agricultural activity and the annoyances it can cause. Purchasers may complain to government authorities or their elected officials about annoyances from agricultural activities. The purpose of this policy is to minimize such complaints by requiring disclosure of more facts about land in agricultural areas and their potential use when properties change ownership.

Implementation:

1. Follow existing provisions in Title 5 of the County Code regarding right-to-farm, disclosure to purchasers of property, disclosure on property tax bills and on land use permit applications (see Appendix E for the disclosure statement included on

contracts to sell or transfer interest in the ownership of property in the unincorporated areas of the county, discretionary land use permit applications, and the property tax bill for the 1993/1994 fiscal year).

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. The County Department of Agriculture should develop a public information program to make the local real estate industry aware of the disclosure provisions on property transactions.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP 9: Soil Conservation.

- **Encourage landowners to participate in programs that reduce soil erosion and increase soil productivity: promote coordination between the Soil Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee, and other agencies and organizations.**
- **Emphasize the long-range benefits of proper drainage control and tillage, cropping, soil amendment, and grazing techniques to minimize soil erosion.**
- **Assure that roads and drainage systems on county-controlled properties and facilities are properly maintained.**

Discussion: Loss of topsoil is a threat to the continued productivity of agricultural lands. The purpose of this policy is to minimize the loss of topsoil by encouraging soil conservation practices on farmlands and on county-controlled properties.

Implementation: The county Department of Agriculture, should enter into an agreement to fund educational efforts regarding soil conservation developed cooperatively by the Resource Conservation Districts, the U.C. Cooperative Extension, and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Educational efforts should utilize all available information and avoid duplication of effort.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

AGP 10: Pest, Vertebrate and Weed Management.

- **Assure that pests such as squirrels and noxious weeds are managed on county properties.**
- **Evaluate the use of non-toxic methods to manage pests, vertebrates and weeds.**

Discussion: This policy emphasizes the importance of managing pests on county-controlled properties. Pests such as squirrels and noxious weeds on county-controlled properties can have a detrimental effect on surrounding agricultural operations, including increased costs to manage pests. In order to minimize concerns about possible environmental and health effects of herbicides and other poisons, the county should evaluate non-toxic ways to manage pests.

Implementation: The county should support continued funding of pest and vertebrate control programs on county properties and facilities where needed to prevent significant effects on agriculture or public health.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

AGP 11: Water Conservation.

- **Encourage farmers and ranchers to conserve water by using efficient and well designed irrigation systems and dryland farming and grazing practices that minimize runoff and excessive water application on all croplands.**

Discussion: Other than the land itself, water is the most precious resource for agriculture. Conserving water can benefit agriculture by reducing groundwater pumping (in effect increasing available water) and reducing costs.

Implementation:

1. The County should encourage and contribute toward funding the U.S. Soil Conservation Service mobile irrigation lab program. This program sends an irrigation mobile lab team to evaluate an irrigation system and gives practical recommendations to farmers on how to conserve water and electricity.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

2. Encourage the U.C. Cooperative Extension to continue its public information and research program describing water conservation techniques that may be appropriate for various agricultural practices in this county.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

3. County departments should facilitate the approval of water conservation and retention facilities for agriculture by providing applicants with information as to which agencies should be contacted regarding such projects.

Timeframe: Ongoing.



THE FOLLOWING POLICY IS NOT INTENDED TO REPEAL ANY LCP POLICIES OR STANDARDS. THE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES ARE IN ADDITION TO ALL APPLICABLE LCP POLICIES, STANDARDS AND ORDINANCES.

AGP 12: Agricultural Water Supplies.

- **Maintain groundwater resources in the county for irrigated cropland uses; expanding urban development should rely primarily on reservoir and imported water sources where available.**
- **Do not approve proposed general plan amendments that result in increased density or urban expansion if subsequent development would adversely affect groundwater supplies needed for existing or expanded agricultural uses on land designated Agriculture.**

Discussion: The purposes of this policy are to strongly promote agricultural uses and to prevent the loss of agriculture due to competition for water with urban and suburban development. Where urban development uses groundwater supplies, surrounding agricultural uses are often eventually displaced. By maintaining groundwater supplies primarily for irrigated agricultural uses, the county can encourage continued and expanded agricultural uses. In addition, this could reduce the chances that urban and

suburban development will deplete agricultural water supplies or make those supplies uneconomical for agricultural use.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to appropriate sections of the LUO, CZLUO and Real Property Division Ordinance to give priority to protecting water supplies for agricultural production when processing proposed land division and discretionary land use permit applications in any land use category.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

2. Conduct or facilitate preparation of groundwater basin/resource capacity studies that identify water supplies and needs for agriculture and other uses.

Timeframe: As determined by the Board of Supervisors.

3. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO to establish standards to ensure that proposed land divisions and Development Plan projects for non-agricultural purposes in rural areas do not adversely affect water supplies for existing or expanded agricultural uses, as identified by approved groundwater basin/resource capacity studies or other studies done in connection with the environmental review process.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

4. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the guidelines for general plan amendments in Framework for Planning of the LUE to reference this policy as it applies to groundwater supplies.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

5. Recommend to LAFCo denial of proposed annexations to incorporated cities or special districts which would adversely affect agricultural water supplies and be inconsistent with preceding implementation measures 1, 2 and 3.

Timeframe: Ongoing through review of proposed annexations.

6. The county Environmental Health Department should initiate an information program to fully identify the potential beneficial uses and potential hazards of reclaimed water.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

7. Expand the membership of the County Water Resources Advisory Committee to broaden the representation for agriculture by adding a representative from each of the following: County Department of Agriculture; U. C. Cooperative Extension; Cattleman's Association; the vegetable and/or intensive crop industry; and the Central Coast Wine Grower's Association.

Timeframe: 6 months from plan adoption.

8. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office should advise the Planning Department on matters involving agricultural water supplies and demand.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Agricultural Land Division

AGP 13: Land Division.

- **Minimum parcel sizes for new land divisions on land designated Agriculture shall be based primarily upon the existing and potential use of land for cropland and grazing.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to revise the method of determining minimum parcel sizes for new land divisions to emphasize long-term protection of the agricultural land resource. The existence of specialized animal facilities should not determine minimum parcel sizes, because such uses are often shorter-term uses. Minimum parcel sizes should instead be based on the long-term capability of the land for crop production and grazing uses.

Minimum parcel sizes should be large enough to sustain efficient farming practices and minimize incompatibility between adjacent agricultural uses. To accomplish this, minimum parcel sizes should be consistent with standards for creating new parcels contained in the revised county Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1991 (and as may be amended from time to time). The standards in the Rules emphasize protecting the county's best agricultural lands by establishing 40-acre minimum parcel sizes for some irrigated lands. However, the 1991 Rules recommended that the minimum parcel size for Class II land be changed from 40-acres to 20-acres (see Table 1 and footnote #6 in 1991 Rules of Procedure). The Rules also recognized that the LUO and CZLUO parcel size criteria would need to be amended prior to the 20-acre minimum becoming effective "so that standards in the Rules of Procedure are no less restrictive" than the standards in the LUO and CZLUO, with the Rules themselves amended to make the parcel size standards consistent between all documents. The 20-acre minimum will help to sustain

prime (Class I and II) lands. While certain intensive crops may be able to be grown economically on substantially smaller parcels, minimum parcel size standards should be based on a variety of possible crops.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO and CZLUO to accomplish the following:

1. Incorporate this policy, including the minimum parcel size standards in the following Figure 9-1. Eliminate parcel sizes based on specialized animal facilities.
2. Eliminate the averaging test that determines minimum parcel sizes based on the average size of adjacent parcels in the Agriculture land use category.
3. Apply the minimum parcel size standards in Figure 9-1 to existing and new agricultural preserves and land conservation contracts, unless a larger minimum parcel size is specified in an existing land conservation contract.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

FIGURE 9-1
MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE (ACRES) FOR NEW LAND
DIVISIONS OF LANDS DESIGNATED AGRICULTURE¹

Soil Conservation Service Land Capability Classification	Irrigated ²	Non-irrigated ²
I, II ³	20 acres	--
III, IV	40	160 acres
VI, VII	40 with orchards or vineyards	320
VIII	--	320

- Notes:
1. For portions of a property with different land capability ratings and agricultural uses, minimum parcel size(s) is determined per the county Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965. (see Appendix A).
 2. The parcel sizes in this table represent the minimum sizes allowable. Discretionary review of proposed land division applications may result in parcel sizes larger than those listed in the table.
 3. Land must be irrigated to qualify for a Class I or II rating. Refer to the Glossary for the definition of irrigated.

AGP 14: Major Agricultural Cluster Projects (this policy is not proposed within the coastal zone).

- **Encourage the use of agricultural cluster division as an alternative to standard land division (AGP 13).**

Discussion: Agricultural cluster divisions should be encouraged as a way to preserve lands for continued and enhanced agricultural production. This is done by clustering dwelling units on relatively small parcels instead of dispersing them on larger parcels and by providing a density bonus. In return, areas of the site intended for agricultural production are permanently protected by a recorded easement, as well as being placed in a Land Conservation Act contract (see Figure 9-2 for an illustration of the major cluster project concept).

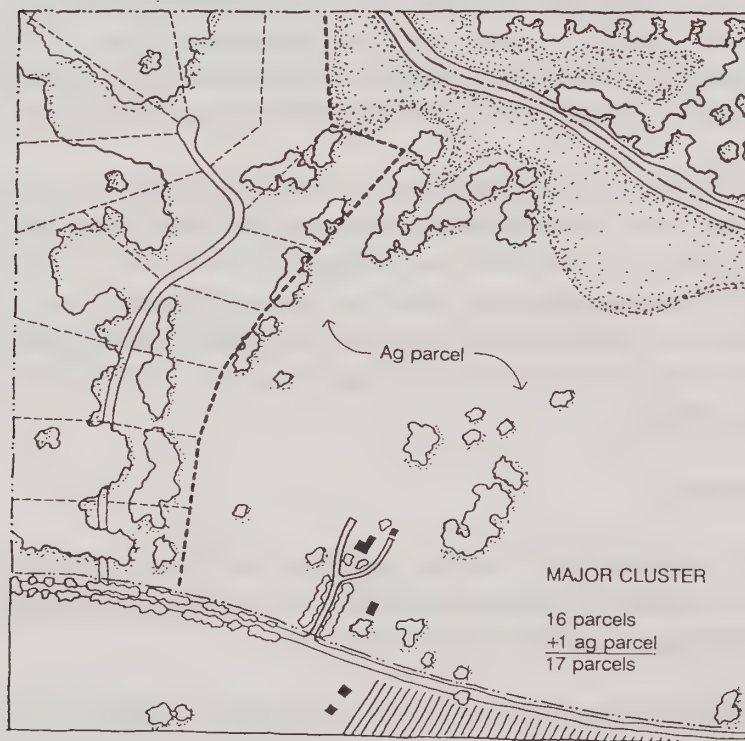
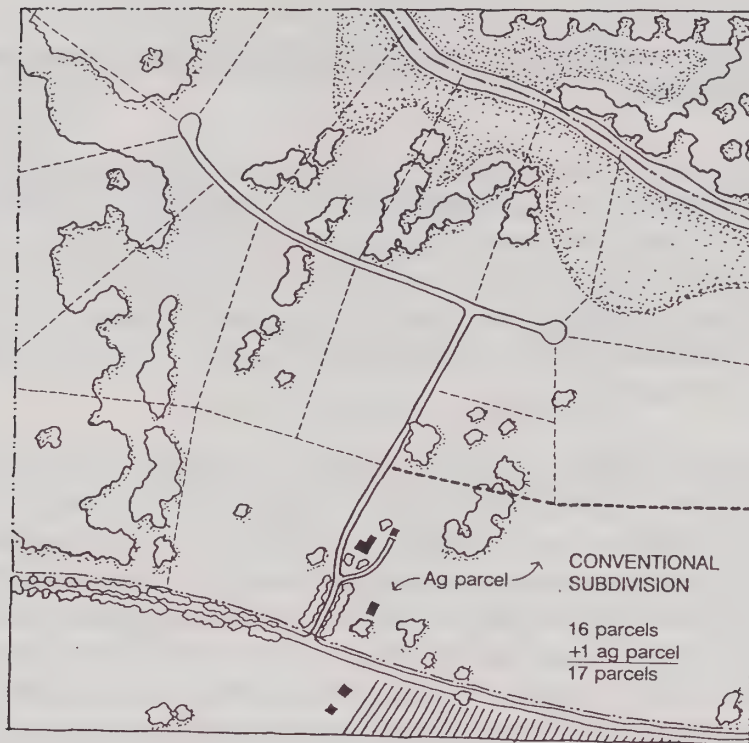
The LUO now provides for the development of residential cluster divisions on large properties in the Agriculture land use category located within five miles of the San Miguel, Paso Robles, Atascadero, San Luis Obispo, Arroyo Grande and Nipomo urban reserve lines and the Creston village reserve line. However, further use of major agricultural cluster projects can be encouraged by making two important revisions to the existing agricultural cluster ordinance: (1) eliminating the requirement for a mandatory environmental impact report; and (2) eliminating the minimum acreage currently required to qualify for an application. These changes would allow a proposed project to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis through the initial study required under CEQA. Since the purpose of the ag cluster ordinance is to protect and enhance agriculture, the concern for parcel size should be that the resulting agricultural parcel will qualify for entering into a land conservation contract under the Williamson Act, rather than establishing an arbitrary parcel size to qualify for being able to propose an agricultural cluster project.

Major cluster projects can be expected to be the more intense type of agricultural cluster projects. Therefore, it is reasonable to continue to limit these types of projects to within five miles of the specified urban and village reserve lines. The less intensive type of agriculture cluster envisioned as minor ag cluster projects (see the following AGP 15) offer an option to land owners in the outlying rural areas (greater than five miles) to relieve some added development potential while still preserving and enhancing their agricultural operation.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO to provide greater incentives for major agricultural cluster projects and greater opportunities for clustering by:
 - a) eliminating the minimum acreage required to qualify for filing an application;

Figure 9-2 - ILLUSTRATION OF MAJOR CLUSTER CONCEPT



b) deleting the requirement that a mandatory EIR be prepared for all applications rather than relying upon the site specific analysis included in the initial study; and,

c) requiring that the resulting agricultural parcel(s) be able to qualify for a Land Conservation Act contract.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

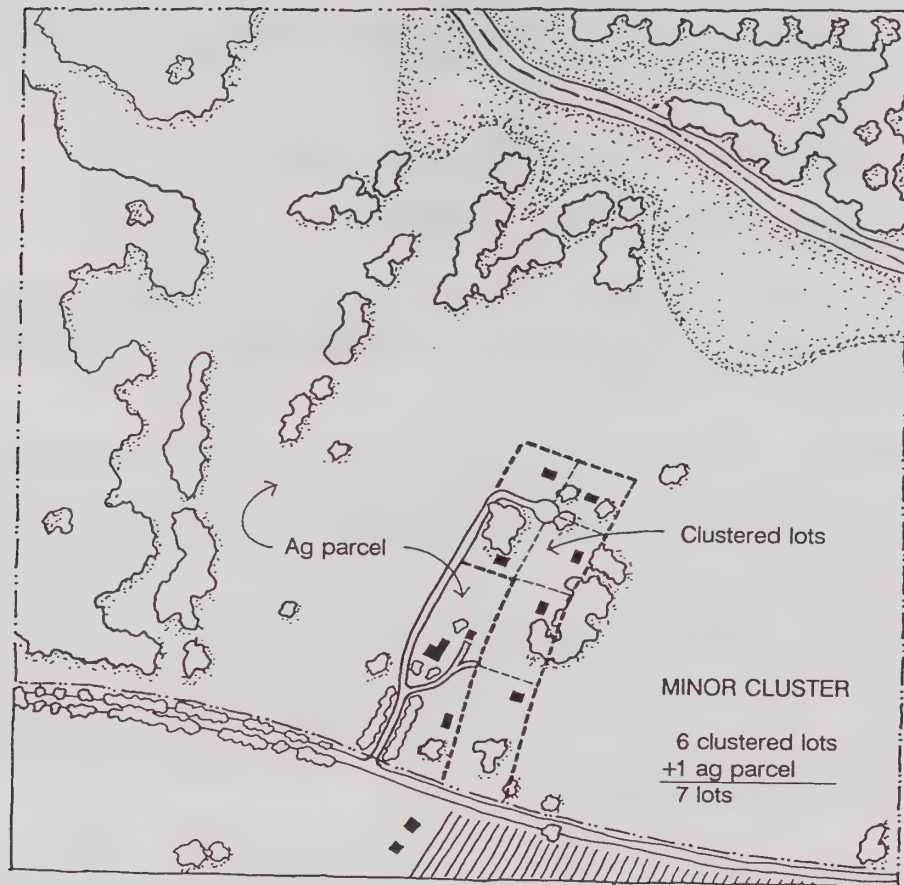
AGP 15: Minor Agricultural Cluster Projects.

- **Encourage development of minor agricultural cluster divisions that are eligible for a density bonus as an alternative to a standard land division in the coastal zone and inland areas of the county.**

Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to encourage agriculturalists to stay on the land in a "family farm development" and to provide increased flexibility for the farm operator. For example, agriculturalists often have a legitimate business need to subdivide land for financing purposes. In addition, agriculturalists may need small homesites for members of the agricultural family so that they can stay on the land for the long term. The implementation for this policy addresses those needs by providing for creation of a limited number of small parcels. Another benefit of this policy is that by encouraging cluster divisions, agricultural lands can be preserved for continued and enhanced agricultural production as explained in AGP 14 (see Figure 9-3 for an illustration of the minor cluster project concept).

Many agriculturalists feel that there are not enough incentives or enough flexibility in the current land use regulations that will encourage property owners to subdivide land using a cluster approach instead of a conventional land division. As a result, cluster land divisions are usually not used. The implementation for this policy addresses those concerns by providing for smaller parcel sizes and some density bonus, but at the same time not requiring that such projects meet the same requirements as a major agricultural cluster project (see AGP 14). The most important differences between the major and minor agricultural cluster project is that minor cluster projects would not be limited to within five miles of an urban/village reserve line; minor cluster projects would receive a straight 20% density bonus, or at least one more lot than could be achieved with a Standard land division; and minor cluster projects would be allowed in the coastal zone. In exchange for the density bonus and flexibility offered by the minor agricultural cluster approach, the agricultural lot(s) shall be of sufficient size to qualify for entering into a land conservation contract under the Williamson Act.

FIGURE 9-3 - MINOR CLUSTER CONCEPT



Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building should propose amendments to the LUO and the CZLUO to establish standards for minor agricultural land divisions consistent with this goal (see Appendix A for an example of ordinance standards).

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

Agricultural Land Preservation

Sales of existing lots in rural subdivisions and other substandard-size parcels scattered throughout the county can result in major adverse impacts on agricultural land use. Many areas containing small parcels are still owned and operated as large farms and ranches. Some areas are protected for the term of land conservation contracts. The contracts prohibit conveyance of individual parcels or groups of parcels that are smaller than the minimum parcel sizes applied to agricultural preserves. The county should encourage agricultural landowners to enter into land conservation contracts. However, additional preservation programs are needed and they should concentrate on the best agricultural lands and be cost-effective to implement.

AGP 16: Agricultural Preserve Program.

- **Encourage eligible property owners to participate in the county's agricultural preserve program.**

Discussion: The agricultural preserve program continues to be the primary program for long-term protection of agricultural land in the county. A Land Conservation Act Contract provides tax incentives for landowners to participate in the program in exchange for agreeing to keep their properties in large parcels and in agricultural uses for minimum terms of 10 or 20 years, depending on property location. A Land Conservation Act contract reduces property taxes that are often out of line with the production value of agricultural land. By doing so, the agricultural preserve program promotes long-term agricultural use.

Additional incentives should be given to encourage land owners to participate in the agricultural preserve program. Detailed policies to maintain and strengthen the agricultural preserve program are described in the revised county Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965.

In another tax-related matter, family farmers should be made aware of the opportunity to measurably reduce federal death taxes by electing to use Internal Revenue Service Section 2032A (Special Use Valuation). A summary of qualifications for that section is included in the revised county Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965.

Implementation: As an additional incentive for landowners to participate in the agricultural preserve program, the Department of Planning and Building shall provide

timely processing of land use permit applications for agriculturally-related development on land subject to Land Conservation Act contracts.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

AGP 17: Transfer of Development Credits (TDC).

- **Establish a voluntary TDC program to help sustain long-term agricultural use and direct growth to more suitable areas.**

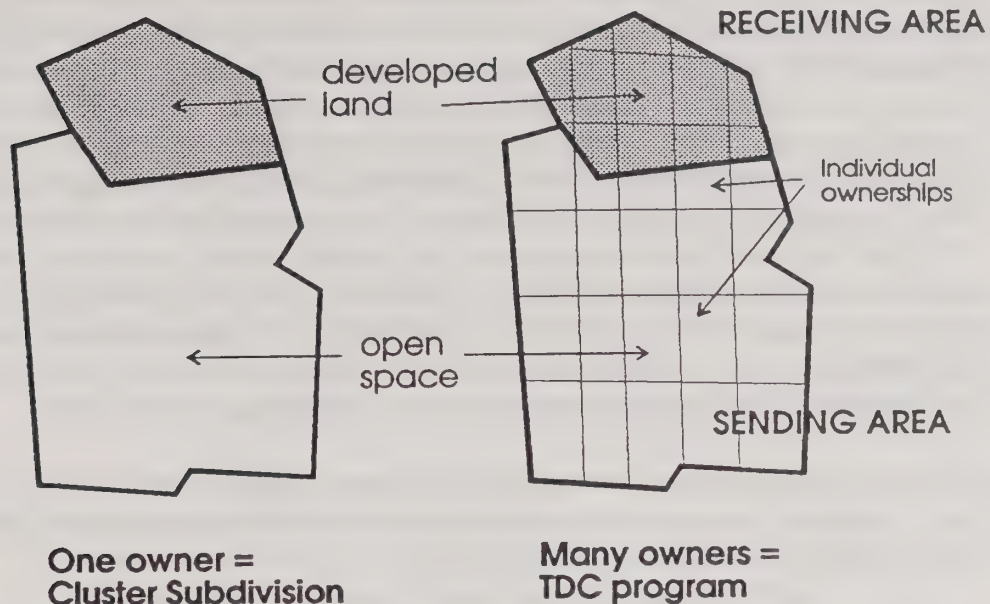
Discussion: The purpose of this policy is to use a TDC program to sustain long-term agricultural use by encouraging transfer of development credits to urban areas and other areas that are more appropriate and suitable for development. A feasibility study for a TDC program in this county is needed to address the economics, practicality and effectiveness of a proposed program. This will be accomplished through Phase 3 of the Rural Settlement Pattern Strategy Study that is currently in progress.

TDC programs can direct growth away from agricultural, scenic or environmentally sensitive areas (generally known as "sending areas") by allowing for higher densities in development areas (generally known as "receiving areas"). Both sending and receiving areas are mapped in a comprehensive plan. The county assigns "development credits" in a systematic manner to property in the sending area, and TDC density ratios of building units per acre in the receiving areas. Through private transactions, developers in receiving areas can purchase development credits from landowners whose property is located in sending areas. Developers can then build at higher densities in the receiving area than normally allowed by the zoning ordinance. The land in the sending area becomes subject to a recorded deed restriction which reflects that the development credits have been permanently retired. The price paid for the development credits compensates the landowner in the sending area for the development credits retired.

A TDC program can give an owner of agricultural land in the sending area an opportunity to receive a return on the sale of development credits. The proceeds from the sale can then be invested in the agricultural operation. An additional advantage of selling development credits is that the proceeds may help reduce the need to subdivide land to pay for business expenses or taxes or to obtain collateral for loans. The result can be to maintain larger acreage farms that can support a greater variety of agricultural uses in the long-term.

TDC programs for the preservation of agricultural land are successfully being used in various areas of the nation. Success depends on a number of factors: a program that is easy to administer and understand, a market demand, a willingness of local government to maintain agricultural land and establish disincentives to develop agricultural land, incentives for developers to buy development credits, assurances to residents in receiving areas additional development in those areas will not impose a strain on community services. A successful program also depends upon whether residents in receiving areas

FIGURE 9-4 - TRANSFER OF DEVELOP CREDITS (TDC) CONCEPT



feel that there is a benefit in return for additional development in those areas; namely, that land in the same general area is permanently reserved for agricultural use.

A TDC program can involve costs to the county. For example, there may be a one-time cost for research and development of an ordinance to implement the program. In addition, there may be on-going costs to administer, enforce and maintain the program.

Implementation: Establish a TDC program, process needed general plan and ordinance amendments to implement the program (see Appendix A for a description of items to be included in a TDC program).

Timeframe: To be determined by the Board of Supervisors at completion of phase III of the Rural Settlement Patterns Strategy Study.

AGP 18: Acquisition and Land Conservancy Program.

- **Encourage and support efforts by non-profit and other conservation organizations to preserve agricultural lands and maintain agricultural production.**

- **Consider establishing county programs to acquire farm lands from willing sellers. Such programs should encourage maximizing flexibility for agricultural operations.**

Discussion: Private non-profit conservation organizations include the San Luis Obispo Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and the American Farmland Trust. The San Luis Obispo Land Conservancy provides assistance to landowners interested in protecting agricultural, aesthetic and ecological values of their land. They offer counseling and assistance in establishing conservation easements, transfer of development credits, estate donations, and other conservation programs. The American Farmland Trust is a national organization dedicated to the conservation of productive farmland. The Trust increases public awareness of agricultural issues, provides technical assistance to government agencies and private organizations, and engages in individual farmland conservation real estate transactions. Although not a private organization, the Coastal Conservancy is a state agency also actively engaged in farmland preservation programs in California coastal counties including San Luis Obispo County.

The following acquisition strategies can be carried out by conservation organizations or by the county. Such programs could have costs for the county to undertake, but may nevertheless have some limited application.

Purchase of Development Rights and Conservation Easements. The purchase of development rights retires those rights through deed restrictions, leaving landowners all other rights of ownership except the right to sell homesites. Landowners may receive income and estate tax benefits, in addition to protecting local agricultural areas from conversion to other uses. However, there may also be tax penalties due to capital gains tax.

Rapidly appreciating land values can make it impossible for young people to buy land to start agricultural careers. Conveyance of development rights to a government entity or land trust reduces the value of the land to its agricultural use value. That can provide farmers and ranchers with income tax benefits.

High land values can also make it impossible for an heir to pay off estate taxes. By reducing the value of the estate through conveyance of development rights, inheritance taxes can be reduced. That can assist heirs in paying off the taxes.

Conservation easements are a common method used by a government entity or conservation organization to preserve agricultural land. This method also involves acquisition of development rights. A Bargain Sale Conservation Easement allows the landowner to receive cash income, but provides a way to offset increased capital gains tax.

Purchase and Resale or Lease with Restrictions. This strategy involves purchasing land and placing restrictions on its use and development. The land is then resold at a

reduce market price that reflects the land use restrictions. The end result is equivalent to purchase of development rights.

Fee Simple Purchase and Lease-Back. This strategy preserves farmland through outright purchase. Both real property and estate tax problems can be solved for farmers who sell their land to a public agency or conservation organization. Fee simple purchase can be very costly. If the property is purchased by a public agency there may be a variety of disadvantages if the land is leased back to a farmer (either the former landowner or another farmer) However, purchase by a private non-profit organization may minimize or eliminate some of the following potential problems:

- Agricultural operators (who may be the previous landowners) would become tenants and would pay rent to the public agency or conservation organization.
- The tenant would have no rights in the land and would have to depend upon the owner for many decisions that were previously made without asking anyone.
- Since a public agency would probably be required to take competitive bids for leases, both the operator and the agency could be reluctant to make long-term investments. Failure to make such investments could result in a lower level of performance for the private tenant and the public landlord.
- The level of performance helps determine whether the rental payments amortize the government's cost of buying and owning the land. If the government's cost is not amortized, tax dollars could be required to make up the difference.
- Purchase lease-back has an uncertainty associated with it. Public pressure could cause the government to restrict the use of the land in a way that prevents successful agricultural production. The long-term effect could be to undermine farming.

Implementation:

1. The Department of Planning and Building, in conjunction with the county Agricultural Commissioner and the U.C. Cooperative Extension, should assist conservation organizations in developing and implementing programs to preserve agricultural land. The agencies should prepare a public information brochure for distribution to the agricultural community making them aware of the advantages of participating in such programs.

Timeframe: 12 months from plan adoption.

2. Consider establishing a program to preserve agricultural lands by purchasing development rights and conservation easements from willing sellers and by cooperating with other jurisdictions' programs.

Timeframe: To be determined by Board of Supervisors at completion of phase III of the Rural Settlement Pattern Strategy Study.

AGP 19: Consolidation of Public and Private Land Holdings.

- **Encourage consolidation of publicly and privately-owned lands that will facilitate better management of public lands and better operation of farms and ranches.**

Discussion: Los Padres National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands include scattered parcels in agricultural areas. Likewise, private inholdings occur within these federal lands. The county should encourage consolidation of land holdings; for example, through land trades between private landowners and federal, state or local government agencies. However, land that is transferred from public to private ownership should not contain significant scenic, recreational or biological resources.

Implementation: The Department of Planning and Building, with assistance from the county Agriculture Commissioner, should work with the U.S. Forest Service, BLM and appropriate state and county agencies to prepare a complete inventory of parcels under federal, state or county ownership that are suitable for agricultural use and would be appropriate for consolidation and transfer from public to private ownership.

Timeframe: 24 months from plan adoption.

CHAPTER 10: GLOSSARY

This chapter contains definitions and abbreviations for some of the terms used in this plan. The definitions of other terms used in this plan may be found in Framework for Planning - Inland Portion, Part I of the Land Use Element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan; Framework for Planning of the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan; the Land Use Ordinance, Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code; and the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, Title 23 of the San Luis Obispo County Code.

Archaeological, Cultural and Historic Resources

Areas of unique historical significance and areas of known or suspected archaeological or cultural value that are confirmed by site-specific study during review of land use permit applications. Archaeological resources include sites containing artifacts used by Native Americans. Cultural resources include sites that are sacred to Native Americans, such as places where prayer and spiritual ceremonies have been performed over hundred and thousands of years.

Agricultural Accessory Structure

An uninhabited structure or building designed and built for the repair of agricultural equipment and to house farm animals, implements, supplies or products (not including commercial greenhouses which are included under "Nursery Specialties," or buildings for agricultural processing activities) that contains no residential use and is not open to the public. Establishments engaged in the repair of agricultural machinery and equipment as the principal use are included under "Farm Equipment and Supplies." Also includes but is not limited to powered wind and solar machines used for direct climate control, and water pumping or other conversion of wind or solar energy to mechanical or thermal power. Wind energy conversion machines for electric power generation are included under "Electric Generating Plants." Includes barns, grain elevators, silos, and other similar buildings and structures.

Agricultural Lands

Land that meets the criteria in Chapter 8, and as further described in Appendix C, for being designated Agriculture in this plan.

Agricultural Processing

Establishments performing a variety of operations on crops after harvest, to prepare them for market on-site or further processing and packaging at a distance from the agricultural area including but not limited to: alfalfa cubing; hay baling and cubing; corn shelling; drying of corn, rice, hay, fruits and vegetables; pre-cooling and packaging of fresh or farm-dried fruits and

vegetables; grain cleaning and custom grinding; custom grist mills; custom milling of flour, feed and grain; sorting, grading and packing of fruits and vegetables; tree nut hulling and shelling; cotton ginning; wineries and alcohol fuel production. Note: any of the above activities performed in the field with mobile equipment not involving permanent buildings are included under "Crop Production and Grazing." (SIC: 0723, 0724)

Animal Raising and Keeping

The keeping, feeding or raising of animals as a commercial agricultural venture, avocation, hobby or school project, either as a principal land use or subordinate to a residential use. Includes the keeping of common farm animals, small-animal specialties such as rabbit farms and other fur-bearing animals; bee farms; aviaries; worm farms; household pets, etc. This definition does not include grazing, which involves the keeping of grazing animals at densities less than two animals per acre, and is instead included under the definition of "Crop Production and Grazing." See also "Specialized Animal Facilities."

Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO)

Title 23 of the San Luis Obispo County Code. The CZLUO contains standards and procedures which regulate development and site design within the coastal zone. The CZLUO, together with the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan, provides comprehensive development standards and review procedures in an integrated land use policy and regulatory system.

Crop Production and Grazing

Agricultural uses including production of grains, field crops, vegetables, melons, fruits, tree nuts, flower fields and seed production, ornamental crops, tree and sod farms, associated crop preparation services and harvesting activities including but not limited to mechanical soil preparation, irrigation system construction, spraying, crop processing and sales in the field not involving a permanent structure. Also includes the raising or feeding of beef cattle, sheep and goats by grazing or pasturing. Does not include cattle feedlots, which are included under "Specialized Animal Facilities." The distinction between feedlots and grazing operations is established by the Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 22.08, and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 23.08. See also, "Animal Raising and Keeping."

Development

Coastal Zone: Pursuant to PRC 30106, "Development" means, on land, in or under water, the placement or erection of any solid material or structure; discharge or disposal of any dredged material or of any gaseous, liquid, solid, or thermal waste; grading, removing, dredging, mining, or extraction of any materials; change in the density or intensity of use of land, including, but not limited to, subdivision pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act (commencing with Section 66410 of the Government Code), and any other division of land, including lot splits, except where the land division is brought about in connection with the purchase of such land by

a public agency for public recreational use; change in the intensity of use of water, or of access thereto; construction , reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of the size of any structure, including any facility of any private, public, or municipal utility; and the removal or harvesting of major vegetation other than for agricultural purposes, kelp harvesting, and timber operations which are in accordance with a timber harvesting plan submitted pursuant to the provision of the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (commencing with Section 4511).

As used in this section, "structure" includes, but is not limited to, any building, road, pipe, flume, conduit, siphon, aqueduct, telephone line, and electrical power transmission and distribution line.

Inland: Any activity or alteration of the landscape, its terrain, contour, or vegetation, including the erection or alteration of buildings or structures. New development is any construction or alteration of an existing structure or land use, or establishment of a land use after the effective date of the Land Use Ordinance.

Ecosystem

All the components of a biological community and the physical environment, and the interactions among and between them. Examples are grasslands, forests and sand dunes. Major Ecosystems are important ecosystems that cover large areas.

Environmentally Sensitive Resources

Areas that have high environmental quality and special significance for ecological, biological, scientific, educational, or passive outdoor recreation purposes. Such areas include habitat of rare or endangered plants or animals; sensitive, unique, endemic, exemplary, or representative natural communities or ecosystems; Natural Area Preserves as described in this plan; key wildlife corridors; important watersheds; lakes, wetlands and estuaries; marine habitats; streams and riparian vegetation; important geologic features or natural landmarks.

Farm Equipment and Supplies

Establishments primarily engaged in sale, rental or repair of agricultural machinery and equipment for use in the preparation and maintenance of the soil, the planting and harvesting of crops, and other operations and processes pertaining to work on the farm; also dairy and other livestock equipment. Includes agricultural machinery (except the sale of trailers, tractors and other motorized, self-propelled farm vehicles, which are included under "Auto, Mobilehome and Vehicle Dealers and Supplies"), dairy farm machinery and equipment, irrigation equipment, poultry equipment and frost protection equipment; hay, grain and feed sales; retail sales of prepackaged fertilizer and agricultural sprays. Sales may include the final assembly of farm machinery, implements or equipment from component parts received from the manufacturer in a partially assembled state, but not the creation of such components from raw materials.

Food and Beverage Retail Sales

Retail trade establishments primarily engaged in selling food for home preparation and consumption, as well as the retail sale of packaged alcoholic beverages for consumption off the premises, including wine tasting facilities which are not on the same site as the winery.

Food and Kindred Products

Manufacturing establishments producing or processing foods and beverages for human consumption and certain related products. Includes: (1) meat, poultry and seafood products (slaughtering, canning, and curing and by-product processing); (2) dairy products processing; (3) canned and preserved fruit and vegetables and related processing; (4) grain mill products and by-products; (5) bakery products, sugar and confectionery products; (6) fats and oil products, including rendering plants; (7) beverages and liquors (except wineries, which are included under "Ag Processing"); (8) and miscellaneous food preparation from raw products (operations on crops subsequent to their harvest are included under "Ag Processing"). (SIC: Group 20)

Framework for Planning - Inland Portion

Part I of the Land Use Element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan which contains policies and procedures that apply outside the coastal zone. It defines how the Land Use Element is used together with the Land Use Ordinance and other adopted plans.

Framework for Planning of the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan

Part of the Local Coastal Program of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan which contains policies and procedures that apply within the coastal zone. It defines how the Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan is used together with the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance and other adopted plans.

Hazard Areas

Lands that need to be set aside or regulated in order to protect public health, safety and welfare. Hazard Areas include lands subject to flood, fire, geologic, and seismic (earthquake) risks and can also include man-made facilities such as pipelines, landfills, levees, stormwater retention areas, and surface mines.

Irrigated

Land having a water supply and irrigation system capable of supporting irrigated crops.

Land Use Category

Any of the districts defined by Chapter 7, Part I of the Land Use Element (Inland and Coastal), which are applied for the purpose of identifying areas of land suitable for particular land uses.

Land Use Element (LUE)

The Land Use Element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan adopted under Section 65302 of the California Government Code. The LUE is a plan describing the official county policy on the location of land uses and their orderly growth and development. The Land Use Element consists of three major sections: Framework for Planning (Part I), the area plans (Part II) and the official maps (Part III).

Land Use Ordinance (LUO)

Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code. The LUO contains standards and procedures which regulate development and site design within the inland portion of the county outside of the coastal zone. The LUO, together with the Land Use Element, provides comprehensive development standards and review procedures in an integrated land use policy and regulatory system.

Local Coastal Plan

The Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, which is a portion of the county's Local Coastal Program as certified by the California Coastal Commission. The Local Coastal Plan consists of the Policy Document, Land Use Element Programs and Standards (Part II of the LUE) and Land Use Element Maps (Part III of the Land Use Element).

Local Coastal Program (LCP)

The LCP consists of (a) the Local Coastal Plan, (b) the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, and (c) other implementing actions for the coastal zone of the county which meets the requirements of the California Coastal Act of 1976 as certified by the California Coastal Commission.

Natural Area Preserve

An area of land or water managed by the Parks Division of the San Luis Obispo County Department of General Services that remains in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities for present and future generations.

Nursery Specialties

Agricultural establishments primarily engaged in the production of ornamental plants and other nursery products, grown under cover or outdoors. Also includes establishments engaged in the sale of such products (e.g., wholesale and retail nurseries) and commercial scale greenhouses (home greenhouses are included under "Residential Accessory Uses").

Open Space

Open space is any area of land or water that remains primarily in a natural or undeveloped state and that has some feature that is worthy of protection. Open space protects wildlife and other natural resources, including productive resources such as agriculture and mining. It protects archaeological, cultural and historic resources. It defines the identity of our communities and prevents urban sprawl. It protects scenic vistas and areas that are hazardous for development. It provides opportunities for recreation.

Open Space Lands

Land that has one or more of the open space features described in the definition of Open Space.

Open Space Uses

The variety of uses that are appropriate on open space lands and the variety of functions served by open space. Open space uses and functions include preservation of natural resources (such as plants and animals, streams, wetlands, and watershed lands); managed production of resources (such as forestry, agriculture, commercial fishing, and mining); outdoor recreation; protection of scenic, historic and cultural resources such as archaeological and historic sites; and protection of public health and safety (such as water reservoirs and areas set aside as earthquake fault zones. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the multiple uses of open space.

Passive Recreation

Non-intensive recreational activities such as riding and hiking trails and nature study that require no more than limited structural improvements such as steps, fences and signs.

Prime Agricultural Lands or Soils (APPLIES OUTSIDE OF THE COASTAL ZONE.)

Prime agricultural lands or soils means any of the following:

- A. Land with a Soil Conservation Service land capability rating of Class I or Class II (all land to qualify for these ratings must be irrigated), or
- B. Other irrigated lands that have suitable soils, climate and water supply which sustain irrigated crops valued according to one of the following criteria:

1. Land planted in crops which have produced an annual gross value of \$1,000 or more per acre for three of the previous five years.
2. Land planted in orchards, vineyards and other perennial crops that would produce an average annual gross value of \$1,000 or more per acre if in full commercial bearing. Value is calculated by multiplying the average production per acre by the average value of the commodity for the previous five years as determined from the Annual Reports of the San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture and Measurement Standards.

Review Authority

The individual or group identified by the Land Use Ordinance (Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code) as having the authority to take action to approve, approve subject to conditions or disapprove a land use permit application pursuant to that title; either the Planning Director, Subdivision Review Board, Planning Commission, or Board of Supervisors.

Rural Areas

Areas that are outside of urban and village reserve lines.

Scenic Resources

Visually unique or outstanding features of the landscape, such as unusual landforms, scenic vistas and viewsheds that are viewed from public places such as a street, highway, park, or the coastline.

Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) Combining Designation

A mapped designation in the LUE that identifies areas having high environmental quality and special ecological or educational significance and that have public value. These special features create a need for more careful project review within SRAs.

Urban Reserve Line (URL)

A boundary separating urban/suburban land uses and rural land uses that is based upon the needs of individual communities for areas of additional growth during the 20-year term of the Land Use Element. Urban reserve lines are mapped in the Land Use Element.

Village Reserve Line (VRL)

A boundary around settlements of greater density than surrounding rural areas and that are not self-sufficient communities. The boundary distinguishes those developed areas from the surrounding rural countryside. Village reserve lines are mapped in the Land Use Element.

APPENDIX A: IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The following Table A-1 is a summary of the measures that will implement the goals and policies in this plan. The implementation measures include a variety of amendments to the Land Use Ordinance (LUO), Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO), other parts of the County Code, and Framework for Planning and the area plans in the Land Use Element (LUE) of the County General Plan. Those plans and ordinances should be revised as shown in the following table through subsequent general plan and ordinance amendments. All of those amendments will be subject to advertised public hearings. In addition, various programs are proposed in order to implement the goals and policies in this plan.

Following Table A-1 are examples of possible ordinance or general plan amendments or other measures that would be needed to implement the recommendations in this plan. Implementation will depend upon future priorities and available funds and personnel.

TABLE A-1

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES FOR THE AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
OSP 1: Public and private development				Open space policies and programs apply to public and private development	See general implementation measures
OSP 2: Conservation and Preservation				Private land owners protect, preserve and maintain open space resources	See general implementation measures
OSP 3: Future open space protection				Identify and protect ecosystems and sensitive resources	See general implementation measures
OSP 4: Tax default acquisitions				County retains properties acquired through tax default to protect/enhance open space resources	See general implementation measures
OSP 5: Acquisition from willing sellers				Public agencies and conservation organizations acquire to protect open space resources	See general implementation measures
OSP 6: Coordinate acquisitions				Coordinate acquisition and management of open space resources	See general implementation measures
OSP 7: Open space management				Manage land to sustain ecosystems and sensitive resources	See general implementation measures

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
OSP 8: Cluster development	22.04.036, 23.04.036, 21.03.010: performance standards to protect sensitive resources and possible density bonus				12 months
General Open Space Implementation				Priorities, criteria and rating system for acquisition from willing sellers	24 months
	TDC program (See AGP 17)			Tax default acquisition (see OSP 4)	12 months
				Criteria for land exchange	12 months
				Donations and gifts, grants	On-going
				Consider formation of Reg. Park and Open Space Dist., CSA's and Mello-Roos districts to provide open space	24 months
				Lease-purchase and Certificates of Participation for open space purchase	24 months

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
				Revenue from user fees and park concessions to acquire and maintain open space	24 months
				Public/private joint venture, corporate sponsors for open space preservation	24 months
	22.04.036 and 23.04.036: Standards for cluster divisions to allow restoration and enhancement of open space resources				12 months
OSP 9: Policies and management strategies for recreational use of open space				Update Recreation Element of general plan	24 months
				Implement Park and Recreation Master Plan	On-going
	22.08: Adopt standards for golf courses in rural areas	Amend Table O to allow golf courses in Rural Lands and Open Space categories			12 months
				Adopt specific plans for each county-operated regional park and Natural Area Preserve	24 months

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
OSP 10: Coordination with agencies to plan and provide recreational uses for open space				Identify appropriate park sites	On-going
				Preserve and protect Lopez Canyon and watershed	On-going
				Public water supply reservoirs available for recreation uses	On-going
OSP 11: Recreation opportunities with private development				Encourage recreational uses in new development	On-going
				Provide access to adjacent public recreation area	On-going
				Acquire easements and dedications for parks and scenic areas	On-going
OSP 12: Private recreation				Encourage private recreation uses compatible with ag and rural uses	On-going
OSP 13: Consolidation of public and private lands				Identify lands suitable for disposal and exchange	24 months

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
OSP 14: Trail access				Encourage U.S. Forest Service to acquire existing road rights-of-way for trail access to National Forest	On-going
OSP 15: Grazing and ag uses on public lands				Prepare management strategy for grazing and ag uses on county-maintained land	36 months
				Cooperate with Federal Government to encourage grazing on public lands where it won't degrade sensitive resources	On-going
OSP 16: Off-highway vehicles				Block off-highway vehicle usage where conflicts with open space resources	On-going
OSP 17: Designation of public lands		Revise purpose and character statement for Open Space category to include Multi-Use Public Lands			12 months
			Change land use category on BLM lands from Rural Lands to Open Space		12 months

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
			Change land use category to Open Space on lands owned by conservation organizations		12 months
OSP 18 & 19: Establishment of Natural Area Preserves				Prepare priority listing and work program for Board of Supervisor approval to establish Natural Area Preserves	24 months
OSP 20: Management goals for Natural Area Preserves				Prepare management plans	Based on OSP 19.
OSP 21: Resource management strategies for Natural Area Preserves				Adopt strategies best suited to each Natural Area Preserve	Based on OSP 19.
OSP 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 & 27: Major ecosystems and wildlife corridors				Map areas of major ecosystems and key wildlife corridors	24 months
			Identify major ecosystems and adopt development standards and management strategies		12 months from completion of mapping of major ecosystems

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
OSP 28 & 29: Stream corridor preservation	22.07: Add development standards for stream corridors in Sensitive Resource Areas; 21.03: Add development standards for new subdivisions		Identify stream corridors for inclusion in Sensitive Resource Area		12 months
OSP 30 & 31: Habitat protection	See OSP 28 & 29		Add areas of unique or sensitive plant and animal habitat in Sensitive Resource Area	Establish "habitat banking" and habitat enhancement programs	In coordination with OSP 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 & 25
OSP 32: Significant Marine Resources				Protect marine resources using National Marine Sanctuary and National Estuary programs.	On-going through Off-Shore Energy Element and LCP
OSP 33, 34 & 35: Protection of archaeological, cultural and historical resources	22.07.100 et seq, 23.07.100 et seq; Amend to establish standards to place maximum emphasis on designing development to avoid or mitigate impacts or resources				24 months

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
OSP 36, 37 & 38: Scenic corridors	22.07 and 23.07: Adopt scenic corridor development standards after completion of studies		Amend to include scenic corridors upon completion of studies	Study scenic roads and highways to determine if and where scenic corridors should be located	Work program - 12 months; corridor studies - On-going based on approved work program
OSP 39, 40 & 41: Hazard areas	22.07 and 23.07: Development standards in hazard areas	Encourage trails, parks, and other recreational where appropriate based on general plan update.		Update Safety Element and Seismic Safety Element	24 months
OSP 42: Ag land conservation		Adopt criteria for when it is appropriate to convert ag land to other non-ag uses	Designate all lands that are Agriculture in Ag/Open Space Element to be in Agriculture land use category	LAFCo develop standards, criteria and procedures re: conversion of ag lands	12 months
OSP 43: Conversion to Small-Lot Rural		Adopt criteria for conversion of agricultural lands to Residential Rural/Suburban and criteria for appropriate designation of Rural Lands near urban and village area	Amend locations of Residential Rural/ Suburban to be consistent with this plan		12 months
OSP 44: Conversion to Urban Lands		Adopt criteria for converting agricultural land to urban use			12 months

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
		Upon completion of Rural Settlement Pattern Strategy Study consider further amendments to criteria for conversion to urban lands			12 months from completion of Rural Settlement Pattern Strategy Study
OSP 45: Community Separators				Complete special studies to identify boundaries of community separators	12 months
	Adopt development standards		Identify community separators, amend land use categories and adopt planning area standards		As specified in adopted work program for completion of special studies
AGP 1: Ag use of small parcels				Through public contact encourage crop specialties and special animal facilities	On-going
AGP 2: Location of uses and facilities	23.04, 22.04 & 22.08: Location of structures and roads within croplands	Table O, inland and coastal: Limitation on uses in row crop terrain and soils	Planning area standards: Limitation on uses in row crop terrain and soils		Framework: 12 months. LUE area plans: As part of update or 18 months for area plans not yet scheduled

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
AGP 3: Residential density	22.08.167: Two primary dwellings per 20-acres or larger; one primary and one secondary on less than 20-acres; primary dwelling within 500 feet				12 months
AGP 4: Retail commercial uses	22.08, 23.08: Performance standards for restaurants, "Food and Beverage Retail Sales" as accessory uses				12 months
AGP 5: Service commercial uses	22.08.048, 23.08.048: Performance standards for "Farm Equipment and Supplies"				12 months
AGP 6: Intensive ag facilities	22.08: Performance standards for wineries and breweries in "Food and Kindred Products"	Chapter 7: Amend definition of "Agricultural Processing" and "Food and Kindred Products" to include wineries and breweries			12 months

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
AGP 7: Ag buffers				Applications for land division and land use permits to be reviewed against Board-adopted ag buffer policies	On-going
AGP 8: Right-to-Farm Disclosure	Existing right-to-farm and disclosure provisions in Title 5			Place disclosure statement on discretionary land use permit application;	On-going
				Public information program directed towards real estate industry developed by Department of Agriculture	12 months
AGP 9: Soil conservation				Educational efforts, including information brochure; continued funding of pest and vertebrate control programs on county properties	12 months
AGP 10: Pest vertebrate and weed management				Funding of pest control programs on county properties	On-going

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
AGP 11: Water conservation ⁶				Support U.S. SCS mobile irrigation lab program. Encourage continued public information and research by U.C. Cooperative Extension; facilitate approval of water conservation and retention facilities	On-going
AGP 12: Ag Water Supplies	22.04, 23.04, Real Property Division Ordinance (Title 21): Applications for land divisions and land use permits to give priority to maintaining ag water supplies; rural non-ag land divisions and development plans to maintain ag water supplies	Chapter 7: Reference policy on effect of GPAs on groundwater supplies in guidelines for GPAs			12 months
				Conduct groundwater basin/resource capacity studies	As determined by Board of Supervisors
				Recommendations to LAFCo	12 months
				Expand membership of County Water Resources Advisory Committee	6 months

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
AGP 13: Land division	22.04.024 & 23.04.024: Revise use and capability tests for minimum parcel size in Ag category; delete 20-acre minimum parcel size for specialized animal facilities, ag processing; delete averaging test; amend minimum parcel size for preserve contracts				12 months
AGP 14: Major ag cluster projects	22.04.037: Ad incentives by eliminating mandatory EIR and minimum acreage required to qualify to file an application; require resulting ag parcel to qualify for ag preserve				12 months
AGP 15: Minor ag cluster projects	22.04, 23.04: Establish standards for minor ag cluster projects				12 months
AGP 16: Ag preserve program				Timely processing of land use permit applications for ag-related development	On-going

TABLE A-1 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES					
POLICY	LUO/CZLUO AND OTHER TITLES	FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING	LUE AREA PLAN	PROGRAM	TIMEFRAME (FROM PLAN ADOPTION)
AGP 17: Transfer of Development Credits				Establish a TDC program and incentives for participation	Determined by Board of Supervisors upon completion of Rural Settlement Pattern Strategy Study
AGP 18: Acquisition programs				Consider county programs to acquire from willing sellers development rights or fee title to preserve ag lands; develop public information brochure making land owners aware of advantages of participating in programs	12 months
AGP 19: Consolidation of public and private land holdings				Prepare inventory of parcels under federal, state or county ownership suitable for ag use and consolidation and transfer from public to private ownership	24 months

EXAMPLES OF ORDINANCE STANDARDS AND OTHER IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Many of the implementation measures for the open space and agricultural policies found in this plan involve proposed amendments to the LUO, CZLUO and the general plan. For the implementation measures that are so cited, the following are examples of language that could be considered in future ordinance and general plan amendments to implement the policy. The examples are provided for informational purposes only. The actual language of amendments that may be adopted will be determined through future staff review and public hearings by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

OSP 38: Scenic Roads and Highways

The following standards are representative of the type of standards that could be adopted to implement OSP 38. The standards are similar to those being considered through the update of the Salinas River Area Plan.

A. Highways Corridor Design Standards. The purpose of the Highway Corridor Design Standards is to provide public views of:

- scenic vistas and backdrops containing varied topography including ridgelines and rock features,
- significant stands of trees and wildflowers, and
- natural landmarks, historic buildings and pastoral settings.

The following standards are intended to expedite the permit process for projects which maintain scenic views and the rural character along portions of _____, while providing opportunities to use other design solutions through a discretionary review process to achieve scenic goals. Only residential structures, residential accessory building, residential access roads, specified agricultural accessory buildings and signs are governed by these standards. All other uses and structures are exempt, such as agricultural roads and nursery specialties.

The following standards apply to land within 300 feet from _____ rights-of-way. These standards also apply to certain hillside and hilltop locations along those rights-of-way that have been determined to contain particular scenic value shown in Figure _____.

1. **Building site limitations.** Where a property is divided by the Highway Corridor boundary, buildings and roads for residences should be located outside the corridor where possible when such location would be environmentally or design superior alternative. If there is no such superior location outside the corridor

boundary, road and/or building sires may be proposed within the corridor subjects to standards 2 through 4.

2. **Permit Requirements.** For developments that choose to comply with standards 3c through 3h, Plot Plan approval is required for residential structures, residential accessory buildings and residential access roads to review conformance with standards 3c through 3h. Projects that do not choose to comply with standards 3c through 3h are required to apply for a Minor Use Permit, or a Development Plan as otherwise required by the Land Use Ordinance.

Within the Highway frontage (limited to the first 300 feet) shown in Figure _____, Plot Plan (with a confirming site visit) approval is also required for agricultural accessory buildings larger than 600 square feet individually or cumulatively, that have a roof pitch of less than 3:12, unarticulated wall surfaces an/or service entrances facing the highway.

If the Plot Plan application cannot be approved in conformance with standards 3c through 3h, the applicant may choose to convert the application to a Minor Use Permit application, with the applicant paying the difference in application fees.

3. **Plot Plan requirements.** Plot Plan (with a confirming site visit) applications shall comply with the following, in addition to other applicable standards:
 - a. Exemptions. An exemption from standards 3c through 3h may be granted if documentation is provided that the project will not be visible from the applicable highway corridor. Such documentation shall at minimum provide topographic contours referenced to sea level, and building elevations with preliminary grading and building plans. A visual analysis of the project's location may be useful to facilitate a decision.
 - c. Highway setback. Where possible, residential buildings, residential accessory structures and agricultural accessory structures larger than 600 square feet shall be set back 100 feet from the applicable scenic highway right-of-way. If there is no feasible development area outside this setback, the projects shall be located on the rear half of the property and shall provide a landscaping screen to provide at least 50% coverage at plant maturity, to be verified by a landscape architect, landscape contractor, certified nurseryman, or other qualified individual approved by the planning director.
 - d. Ridgetop development. Structures within the corridor boundaries shall be located so they are not silhouetted against the sky as viewed within a two-mile radius measured from the proposed building site to the edge of the applicable highway right-of-way.

- e. Slope limitation. Grading for structures and roads shall occur on slopes that are 20% or less.
 - f. Landmark features. Grading and placement of structures shall occur at least 150 feet from any significant rock outcrop or geologic feature that is visible within a two-mile radius from scenic highways and road.
 - g. Building height and color. Maximum building height is 25-feet above natural grade. Building color other than trim shall be no brighter than 6 in chroma and value on the Munsell Color Scale on file in the Department of Planning and Building.
 - h. Landscaping. A landscaping plan is required that will ensure at least 50% screening of the structure at plant maturity. Landscaping shall include mitigation planting or seeding for graded cut and fill areas and a low water use irrigation system. Proper installation of the landscaping shall be verified by a certified nurseryman or landscape architect.
4. **Discretionary permit requirements.** Minor use permit approval is required for projects that are unable to meet the requirements for a Plot Plan as specified in standards 3c through 3h above. Minor Use Permit and any Development Plan application that may otherwise be required by the Land Use Ordinance shall include a visual analysis that is prepared by a registered architect, landscape architect or other qualified individual acceptable to the Environmental Coordinator. The visual analysis is to be utilized to determine compliance with the intent of standards 3c through 3h and the following:
- a. Locate development, including access roads, in the least visible portion of the site consistent with the protection of other resources, as viewed from the applicable scenic highway or road. Use existing vegetation and topographic features to screen development from view as much as possible.
 - b. Minimize grading that would create cut and fill slopes visible from the designated roadway.
 - c. Minimize building height and mass by using low-profile design where applicable. Minimize building appearance by using colors no brighter than 6 in chroma and value on the Munsell Color Scale on file in the Department of Planning and Building.
 - d. Provide landscaping to screen and buffer development with native or drought-resistant plants including the extensive use of trees and large-growing shrubs.

5. **Residential land divisions - cluster requirement.** Residential land divisions are encouraged to be clustered in accordance with applicable sections in Land Use Ordinance chapter 22.04, unless standard subdivision design can include clustered residential building sites that will be in equal conformity with standards 3c through 3h. Application review shall determine whether the proposed parcels are designed so that residential buildings, accessory buildings and roads will be in conformity with standards 4a through 4d, in addition to other applicable standards.

Guideline: retain land in open space in new land divisions that will preserve existing views of land subject to the Highway Corridor design standards.

AGP 2: Location of Uses and Facilities, Implementation 2

Implementation measure #2 recommends amending Framework for Planning of the LUE and the LUE area plans to limit allowable uses on properties meeting the criteria for row crop terrain and soils (as described in Appendix C) to the following, as identified by Table O, Part I of the LUE: agricultural accessory structures; animal raising and keeping; crop production and grazing; nursery specialties (soil-dependent); ag processing; specialized animal facilities (except where precluded by LUE planning area standard); farm support quarters; single family dwellings; mobile homes; residential accessory uses; temporary dwellings; water wells and impoundments; pipelines and transmission lines; petroleum extraction (where there is no feasible alternative location on non-prime soils and where land disturbance is minimized by using measures such as directional drilling); roadside stands; outdoor retail sales; public safety facilities; and accessory storage. (The latter five uses may not be appropriate on prime lands within the coastal zone.) The repair and maintenance of farm machinery and equipment as an accessory use is allowable.

AGP 4: Retail Commercial Uses and AGP 5: Service Commercial Uses

The implementation measures for AGP 4 and AGP 5 recommend amending the LUO to require that the accessory uses specified in AGP 4 and AGP 5 comply with the following:

1. Be located on non-prime agricultural lands, unless the site is not conducive to sustained production agriculture as determined through a Minor Use Permit. On non-prime lands, the area of site disturbance or outside use area shall not exceed 2 percent of the site area or one acre, whichever is greater. The preceding limitation shall not apply if the use is located only on agriculturally unusable portions of the property.
2. Be subject to Minor Use Permit (MUP) approval if the gross floor area of the accessory use exceeds 2,500 square feet and Plot Plan approval if less than 2,500 square feet. Discretionary (MUP) projects shall be subject to a finding that the size of the project is commensurate with agricultural needs.

3. Take direct access from a county-maintained road and not cause an adverse impact on the circulation system.
4. Be set back a minimum of 50 feet from all property lines and a minimum of 100 feet from a dwelling on any other property.
5. Be designed and developed in a manner that protects sensitive environmental resources.
6. Be reviewed by the County Department of Agriculture for compatibility with adjacent agricultural uses.
7. Have adequate water quantity and quality for the proposed type and intensity of development as confirmed by the County Health Department.
8. Not be required by Chapter 22.04 to have a greater number of parking spaces than the primary use of the site.
9. Meet all applicable fire protection standards as confirmed by the fire protection agency having jurisdiction.
10. Comply with the Landscaping, Screening and Fencing standards in LUO Sections 22.04.180 et seq., or LUO or planning area standards for landscaping, screening and fencing in scenic corridors where applicable, whichever are more restrictive.
11. Comply with the sign standards in LUO Sections 22.04.300 et seq. or any applicable LUO or planning area standards for signs in scenic corridors where applicable, whichever are more restrictive.

AGP 13: Land Division, Note Regarding Use of Table 9-1

For portions of a property with different land capability ratings and agricultural uses, minimum parcel size(s) is determined per the Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 as follows:

Procedures for Determining Qualification and Minimum Parcel Size for Land with Mixed Agricultural Potential or Use

- a. Mark the boundaries of the property on a copy of the Soil Conservation Service soils map, identify the land capability ratings of different soils on the property from the soils descriptions in the soils report, and calculate the acreage of each category having a different minimum acreage requirement as shown in Figure 9-1 of the Agriculture and Open Space Element. The acreage of existing agricultural uses, which is considered only

if the property contains irrigated orchards or vineyards, is determined from information provided by the applicant and verified by site viewing, land use maps and/or air photos.

- b. Prepare tables as shown in the following examples. The number of parcels or fractional portions thereof in the last column is determined by dividing the acreage of each category by the minimum acreage requirement in Figure 9-1.
- c. Minimum Parcel Size for New Land Division: Divide the total property acreage by the total number of parcels. If the figure so derived is situated in between the successive minimum acreage figures in Figure 9-1, the minimum parcel size to be applied is to be the larger of the two figures.

Example 1: Minimum Parcel Size for New Land Division

<u>Land Capability</u>	<u>Agricultural Use</u>	<u>Minimum Acres</u>	<u>Computational Parcel Size</u>	<u>Factor</u>		
Class I	Vegetables	20	-	20	=	1.00
Class VII	Grazing	80	-	320	=	0.25
Total		100				1.25

The total property size of 100 acres divided by 1.25 is 80 acres, which is the appropriate minimum parcel size. The property could not be divided.

Example 2: Minimum Parcel Size for New Land Division

<u>Land Capability</u>	<u>Agricultural Use</u>	<u>Minimum Acres</u>	<u>Computational Parcel Size</u>	<u>Factor</u>		
Class III	Alfalfa	100	-	40	=	2.5
Class IV	Barley	240	-	160	=	1.5
Class VI	Grazing	160	-	320	=	0.5
Total		500				4.5

This property would first be evaluated to determine if there are existing parcels of record that could be designated with different minimum parcel sizes according to predominant land capability. However, if the property consists of intermixed land capability ratings, it would be designated with a single minimum parcel size. The total property size of 500 acres divided by 4.5 is 111 acres; this figure is then raised to 160 acres as the appropriate minimum parcel size for the property according to the specific minimum parcel sizes in Table 3. The actual land division capability, then, would be three parcels of 160 acres or more each.

AGP 15: Minor Agricultural Cluster Projects

The implementation measure for AGP 15 recommends amending LUO Section 22.04 and CZLUO Section 23.04 to add a section entitled "Minor Agricultural Cluster Projects," to incorporate the following provisions:

1. The land division shall be consistent with continuation of the agricultural use of land on the larger lots.
2. The land division may include two or three lots smaller than the minimum parcel sizes allowed in AGP 13.
3. The maximum total number of lots in the proposed minor cluster project shall be determined by AGP 13. In addition, a density bonus of 20 percent shall then be added to the allowed number of new parcels, with the allowed bonus resulting in not less than one more additional parcel.
4. The small parcels, where possible, shall be located on isolated, non-prime and agriculturally unusable portions of a property, such as small areas of non-prime soils separated from the main farm or ranch by public roads, creeks or other features.
5. The small lots shall, where possible, be located adjacent to each other, existing small properties and existing roads. Homesites shall be located to minimize visual impacts from public roads where possible.
6. The proposed residential lots will not result in conflicts with agricultural uses on any adjacent land.
7. The proposed residential lots shall have suitable access from a public road and such access will not use significant agricultural land or interfere with agricultural operations.
8. The proposed small lots shall be between 2-1/2 and 5 acres in size and may be used for residential dwellings in accordance with the LUO standards for residential density in the Agriculture category.
9. The clustered residential lots will not be subject to a land conservation contract.
10. The larger agricultural lot(s) shall be subject to a recorded easement that will permanently protect agricultural land as a condition of the minor cluster land division, and the resulting agricultural parcel(s) shall be of sufficient size to qualify for an agricultural preserve contract under the county Rules of Procedure to Implement the Land Conservation Act of 1965.

AGP 17: Transfer of Development Credits (TDC)

What are the elements a TDC program must have? It must have:

- **A Clear Purpose** - There must be a clear mission to protect agriculture, important natural areas or some other resource of value to the specific community within which the program is established.
- **A Designation of Sending Areas** - The land from which development credits can be sold.
- **A Designation of Receiving Areas** - Land where the owners can purchase and apply the transferred development credits.

And, as a part of the designation of a receiving area, the program must be clear about the "base development credits" on receiving parcels -- the amount of development that can occur under current regulation without the purchase of transferrable development credits.

- **A Means of Assigning Credits (The Exchange Rate)** - This is the amount of development, over base development, which can be approved in the receiving areas as a result of purchase of a single development credit from the sending area.
- **A Market for Purchasing and Selling Credits** - This includes incentives in public policy and land use regulations that will encourage the transfer of credits.
- **A Clear Implementing Ordinance** - This includes a means of recording transfers and other provisions that make it easy to understand how the program works; how it will affect landowners within both sending and receiving areas.
- **Support of the Community** - It must be simple and easy to understand, flexible in meeting needs of landowners in both sending and receiving areas, minimize risk to landowners, and balance protection with opportunities for economic growth.

APPENDIX B: NATURAL AREA PRESERVES

The following management goals and strategies for natural area preserves from the Natural Areas Plan, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on September 1, 1992.

MANAGEMENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR NATURAL AREA PRESERVES

The following goals and strategies are intended to provide guidelines for the creation of site specific management plans for maintaining the delicate and sensitive biosystems at County operated Natural Area Preserves. Each Natural Area Preserve will be managed consistent with these goals, although variations will occur depending on the natural resources found at each site. Such management plans shall be approved, or as needed amended, by the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Commission prior to implementation.

The intent of these goals is to provide a general natural areas land management framework for the operation, maintenance and management of those Natural Area Preserves that are currently under or may come under the management of the County of San Luis Obispo through purchase from a willing landowner, dedication of open space land to mitigate development impact or cooperative agreement with another public agency.

NATURAL AREA GOALS

Goals are a fundamental commitment by the County of San Luis Obispo to provide a Natural Area Preserve that serves primarily to protect, restore and enhance the natural resources of the area, while providing passive recreational opportunities. With this mission, the goals will direct all future activities at the preserve for years to come. They are:

1. Protect, restore and enhance the natural resources of the site.
2. Provide a significant recreation/education experience for visitors from throughout the County.
3. Provide an appropriate interpretive program which will increase public understanding and appreciation of the significant natural and cultural resources of the site.
4. Provide managed public access which emphasizes enjoyment of the site's natural resources.
5. Achieve compatibility between protection of the site's natural resources and serving human use demands.

6. Manage Natural Area Preserves in a manner which is compatible with adjoining ecosystems.
7. Permit only those uses which are of a nonconsumptive nature compatible with preservation of the natural resources associated with each site.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Goal #1: Protect, restore and enhance the natural resources of the site.

Goal #1 Strategies:

- A) Identify resources that will provide the fundamental basis for managing the preserve site.
- B) Identify sensitive habitats and limit uses accordingly.
- C) Establish an ongoing resource monitoring and control program to ensure the protection of sensitive habitats.
- D) Where appropriate, initiate a native revegetation program and identify areas for mitigation bank exchange.
- E) Where appropriate, develop a program for the control of harmful non-native species.
- F) Develop a resting program for degraded/overused areas and guidelines for closure of such areas.

Goal #2: Provide a significant recreation/education experience for visitors from throughout the County.

Goal #2 Strategies:

- A) Develop a program to actively promote the use and appreciation of Natural Area Preserves to the people of San Luis Obispo County.
- B) Where appropriate, provide barrier-free access to the resource sites.
- C) Coordinate Natural Area Preserves with proposed regional trails.

Goal #3: Provide an appropriate interpretive program which will increase public understanding and appreciation of the significant natural and cultural resources of the site.

Goal #3 Strategies:

- A) Develop an interpretive program that offers a significant experience to all County residents.
- B) Recommend informative and visually low-profile interpretive walk nodes that promote both the visual and environmental qualities of the Natural Area Preserve.
- C) Develop a volunteer interpretive program that is coordinated through the County's Park Division.
- D) Develop an environmental education program for school age children and encourage the use of the Natural Area Preserves by educational organizations.

Goal #4: Provide managed public access which emphasizes enjoyment of the site's natural resources.

Goal #4 Strategies:

- A) Establish passive recreation opportunities that do not degrade or interfere with environmental resources at each site.
- B) Establish recreation use areas that do not degrade or interfere with environmental resources at each site.
- C) Enhance existing recreational use areas without further disturbances to the environment.
- D) Eliminate recreational uses that are incompatible with sensitive resources, i.e., off-road vehicles.
- E) Focus recreational uses to provide an interpretive and educational experience.
- F) Establish carrying capacities and seasonal limits for compatible recreational use.

Goal #5: Achieve compatibility between protection of the site's natural resources and serving human use demands.

Goal #5 Strategies:

- A) Limit development and activity within each Natural Area Preserve which is inconsistent with environmental protection of the site.
- B) Initiate a positive and informative signing system with an emphasis on environmental education.
- C) Establish a coordinated ordinance and regulation enforcement plan for each site.
- D) Establish a resource monitoring system to assess human impact on each preserve.
- E) Establish guidelines for closure of areas to recreational needs to protect the site's natural resources.

Goal #6: Manage Natural Area Preserves in a manner which is compatible with adjoining ecosystems.

Goal #6 Strategies:

- A) Establish a coordination program with other environmental and public agencies.
- B) Establish a coordination program with adjoining private property owners providing protection to the natural resources of each site.
- C) Identify critical interface areas and develop a management program that supports diverse ecosystems.

Goal #7: Permit only those uses which are of a nonconsumptive nature compatible with preservation of the natural resources associated with each site.

Goal #8 Strategies:

- A) Identify compatible and incompatible activities at each site.
- B) Establish guidelines for compatible activities at each site.
- C) Periodically evaluate the impact of activities allowed at each site for potential incompatibility.
- D) Develop an educational program for site users stressing nonconsumptive activity.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Natural Area Preserves are divided into three categories:

Natural Park: A stand-alone preserve, not part of another park facility. Such an area shall remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities for present and future generations.

Natural Area: A preserve which is managed as part of another park facility. Such an area shall remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities for present and future generations.

Community Greenway: A preserve linking natural areas, or, adjacent to and shaping community or urban growth. Such an area shall remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities for present and future generations.

Location: Site of the proposed preserve, except in cases of generic habitat type.

Description: A brief narrative of the significant features and/or habitat types qualifying a site for preservation.

Identified Natural Area Factors: These eight factors are defined in the policy statement as critical in determined need for preservation.

Management Objective: Specific site objectives beyond those contained in the Management Goals and Strategies.

Management Restrictions: Specific site restrictions which must be considered in developing site management plan.

Other Pertinent Information: Notes of interest and/or concern which may influence site selection or management.



PUBLIC LANDS COUNTY OWNERSHIP/MANAGEMENT



UPPER EL CHORRO NATURAL AREA

Location: 1 mile north of San Luis Obispo off of Highway 1

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: San Luis Obispo County

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 300 acres

Description: Dominated by Dairy Creek and associated riparian habitat, this section of the park also contains large tracts of oak woodland and grassland. Vast array of wildlife including large populations of bobcat and turkey. Adjacent to other public lands and programmed for trail development leading to U.S. Forest Service property on West Cuesta Ridge.

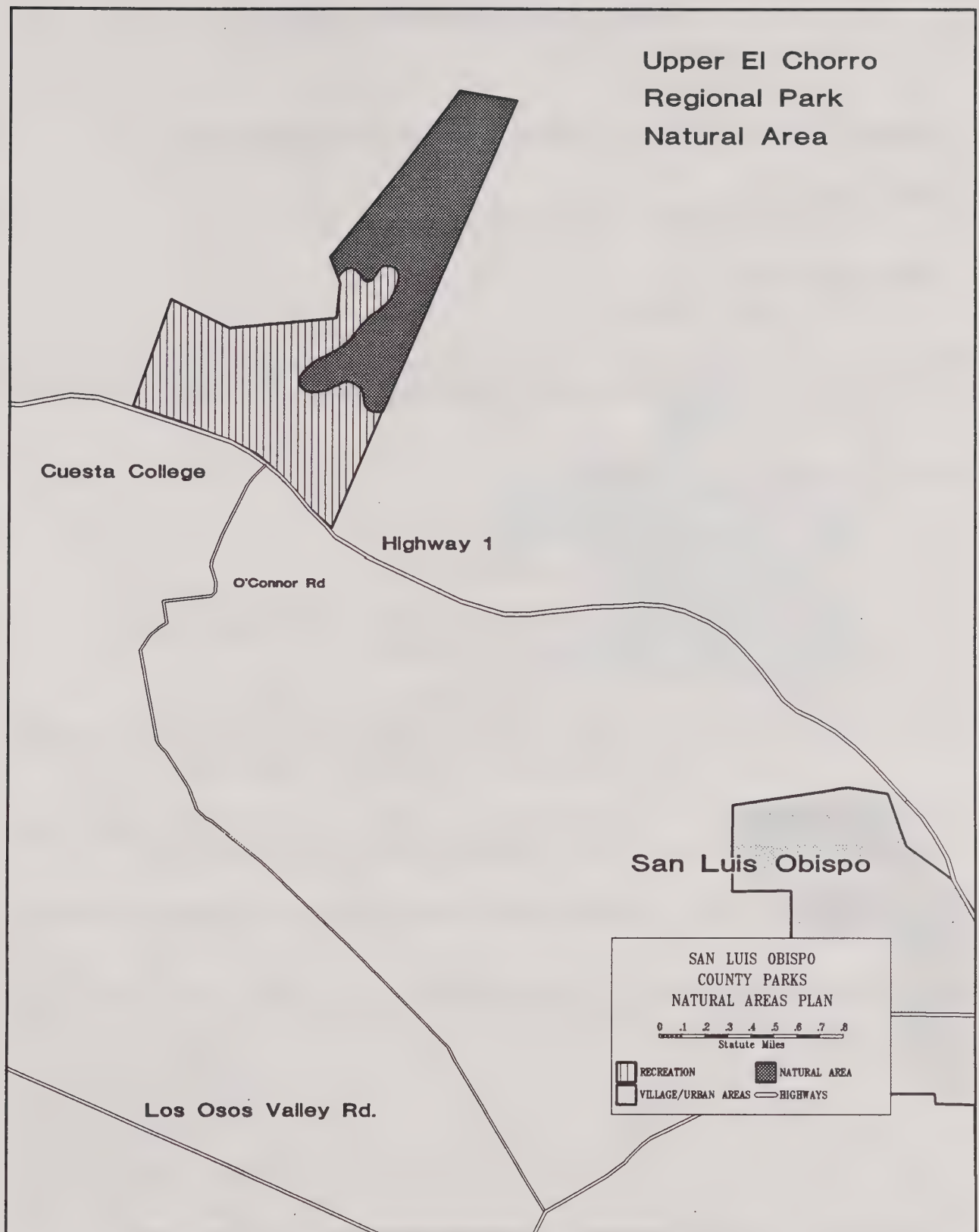
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- ☐ 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Trail development expanded to National Forest on West Cuesta Ridge with habitat protection and riparian restoration. Implement interpretive program coordinated with County Schools. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas. Reforestation of riparian zone and reintroduction of native species. Explore cooperative management efforts with adjacent public landowners.

Management Restrictions: Restricted access due to unexploded ordnance. Mountain bikes limited to trails so designated.

Other Pertinent Information: Ordnance scheduled to be removed in early 1992. Restoration of Dairy Creek riparian zone scheduled for early 1992.



LOPEZ LAKE NATURAL AREA

Location: 10 miles east of Arroyo Grande at Lopez Lake Recreation Area

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: San Luis Obispo County

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 3,000 acres

Description: Rugged and primitive, the area is valuable as wildlife habitat with frequent sightings of many large mammals including bear and mountain lion. Nearly contiguous with U.S. Forest Service property.

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

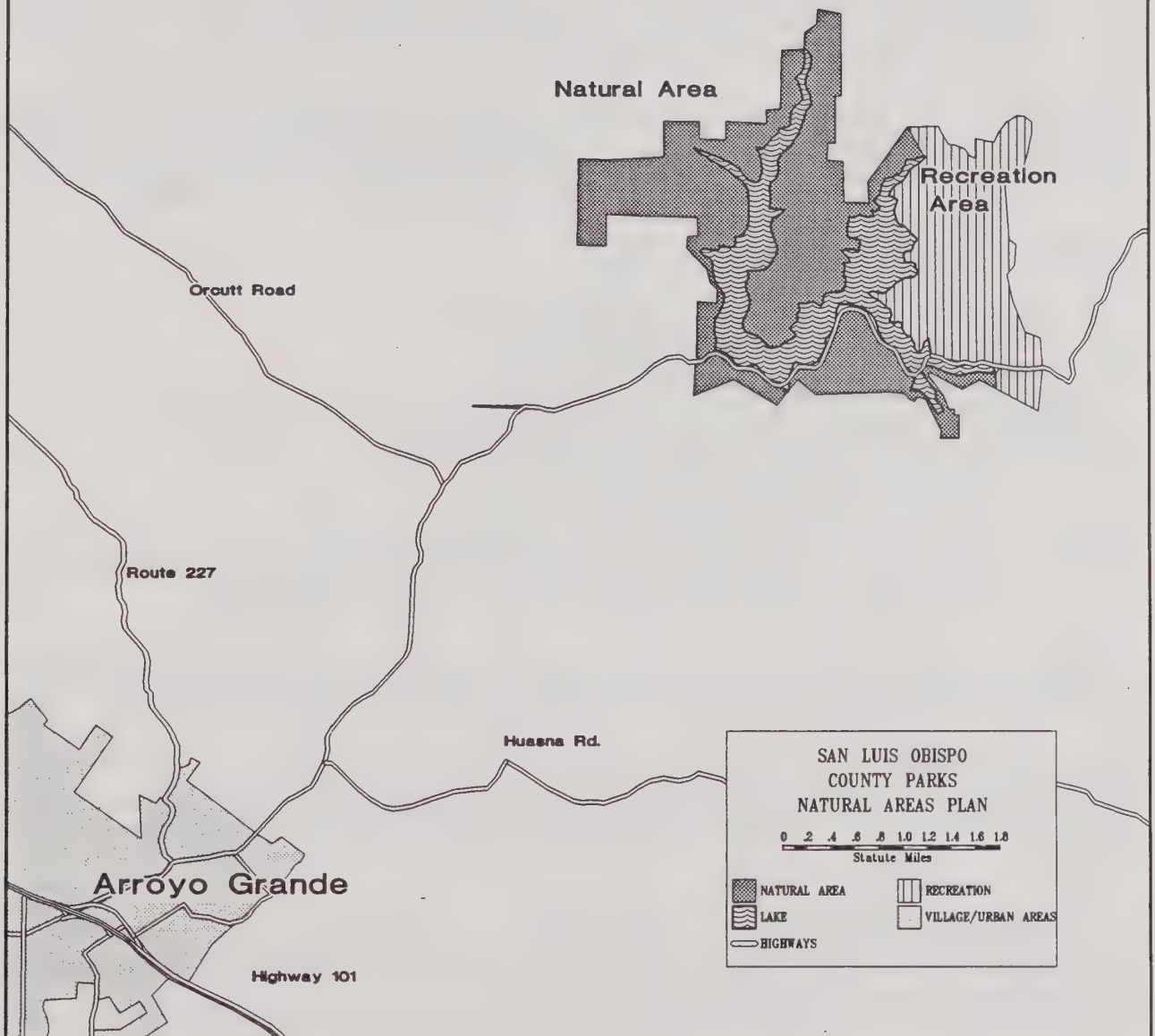
- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Passive recreation consistent with habitat protection. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas.

Management Restrictions: Area may be closed to public access during periods of extreme fire danger.

Other Pertinent Information: Explore acquisition of or easement across adjacent land separating preserve from National Forest.

Lopez Lake Natural Area



SANTA MARGARITA LAKE NATURAL AREA

Location: 8 miles east of the town of Santa Margarita at Santa Margarita Lake

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: The Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 5,827 acres of Army Corps of Engineers property (including lake), approx. 2,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management property

Private Lands: 576 acres--willing seller; grant application for purchase submitted.

Description: The land is dominated with an oak/digger pine woodland forest with extensive areas of chaparral. Riparian habitat surrounds seasonal rivers and streams, ponds, and the lake itself. Excellent wildlife habitat for the Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, and Peregrine Falcon.

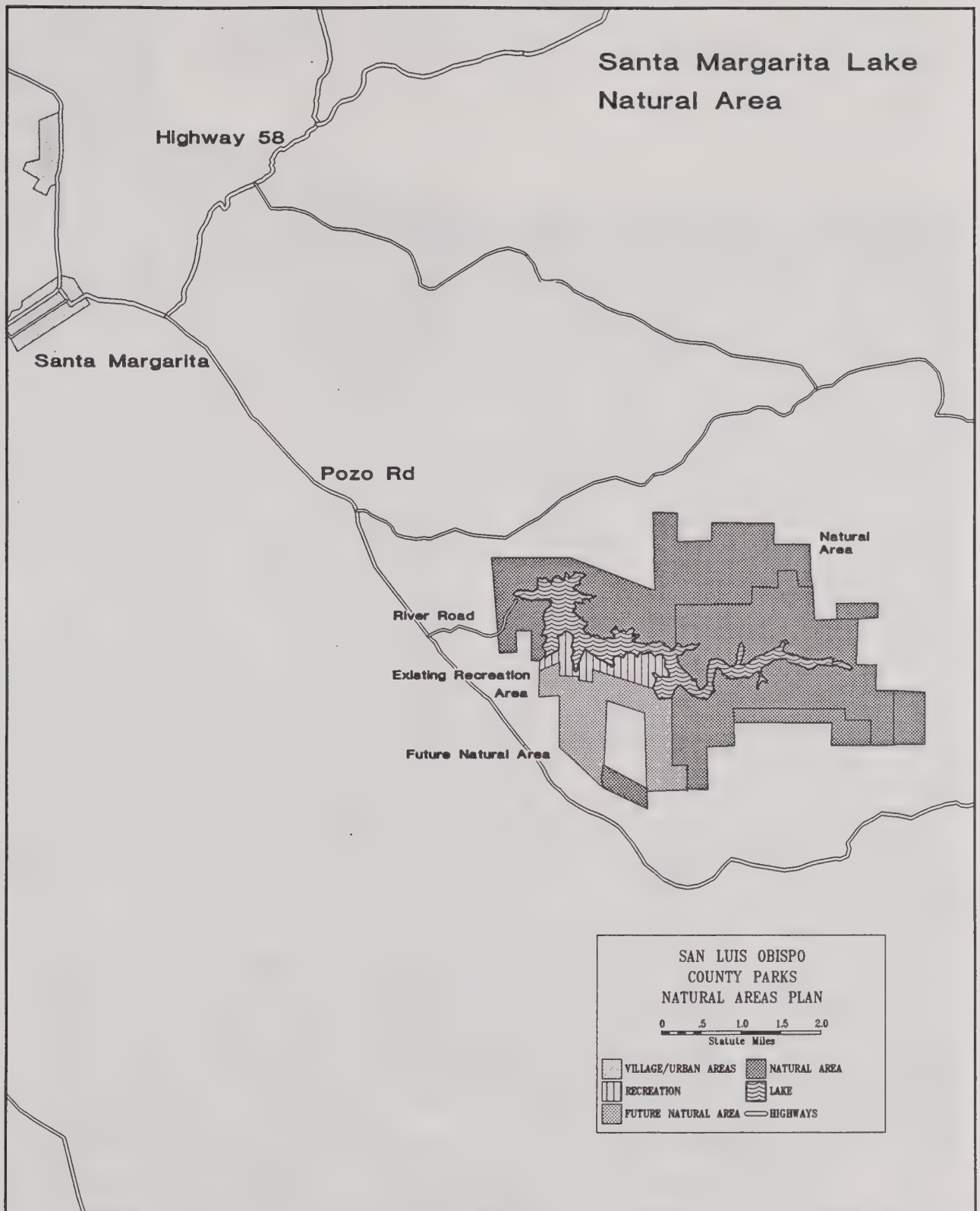
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

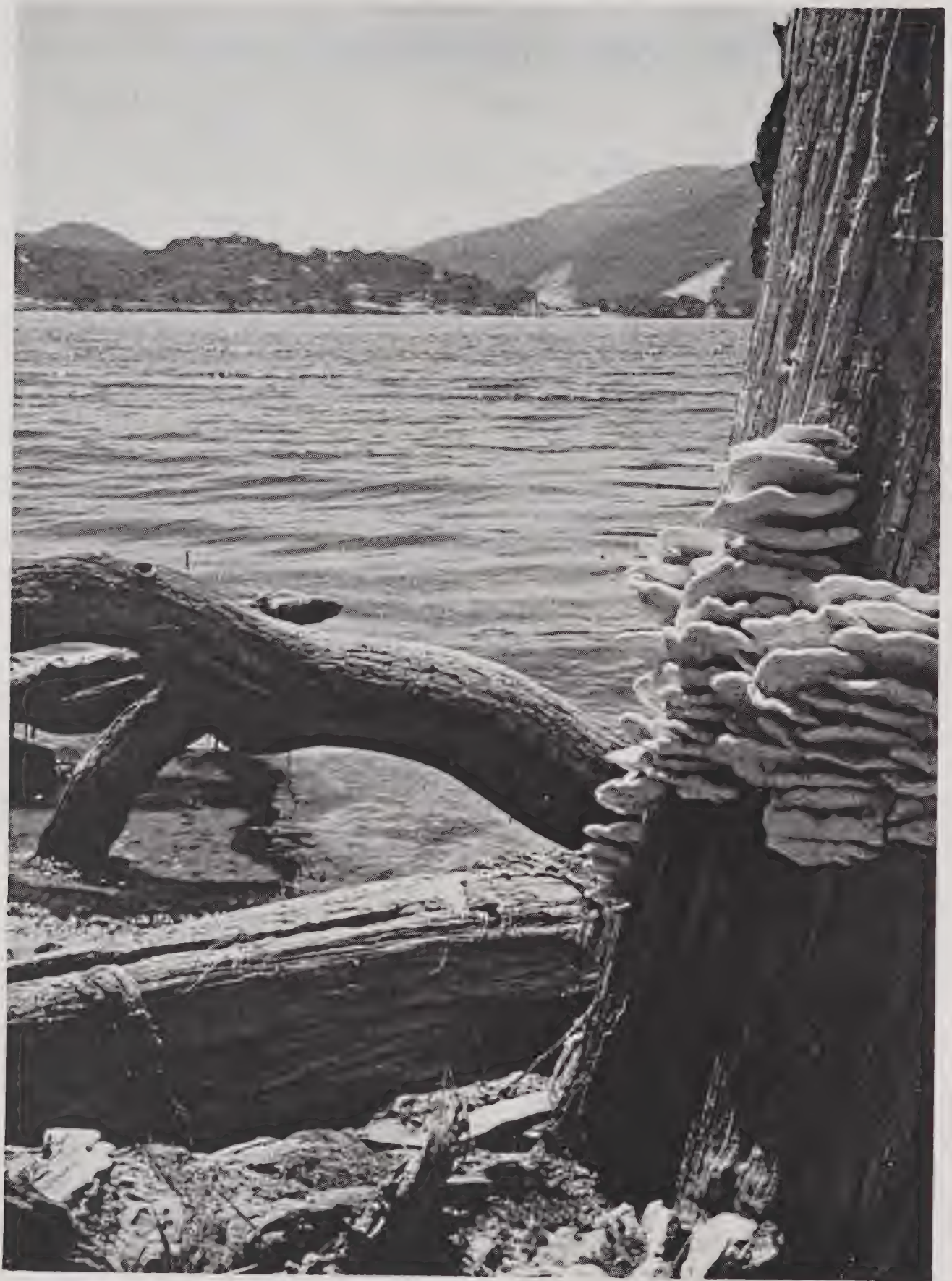
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- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation, passive recreation and habitat enhancement. Reintroduction of Peregrine Falcon. Reforestation of native oak woodlands and riparian habitat.

Management Restrictions: Restricted public access during periods of extreme fire danger. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas. Restrict public access to Peregrine Falcon nesting sites. Designate specific mountain bike routes.

Other Pertinent Information: Due to potential for an extensive trail network, a volunteer mounted patrol should be developed. Lake will continue to be operated as a fishery, however it is included as a part of the Natural Area.





PUBLIC LANDS COUNTY MANAGEMENT PROPOSED



PISMO LAKE NATURAL AREA

Location: Fourth Street in Pismo Beach

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: California Department of Fish and Game

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 69 acres--7 east of Fourth Street, 62 west

Description: A highly endangered freshwater marsh surrounded by urban development. Considerable filling of the marsh has occurred in the past, with siltation occurring due to careless land development. Roughly 50 acres are wetlands and the rest composed of upland grasslands, riparian and oak savannah. Resting/feeding stop for migratory waterfowl.

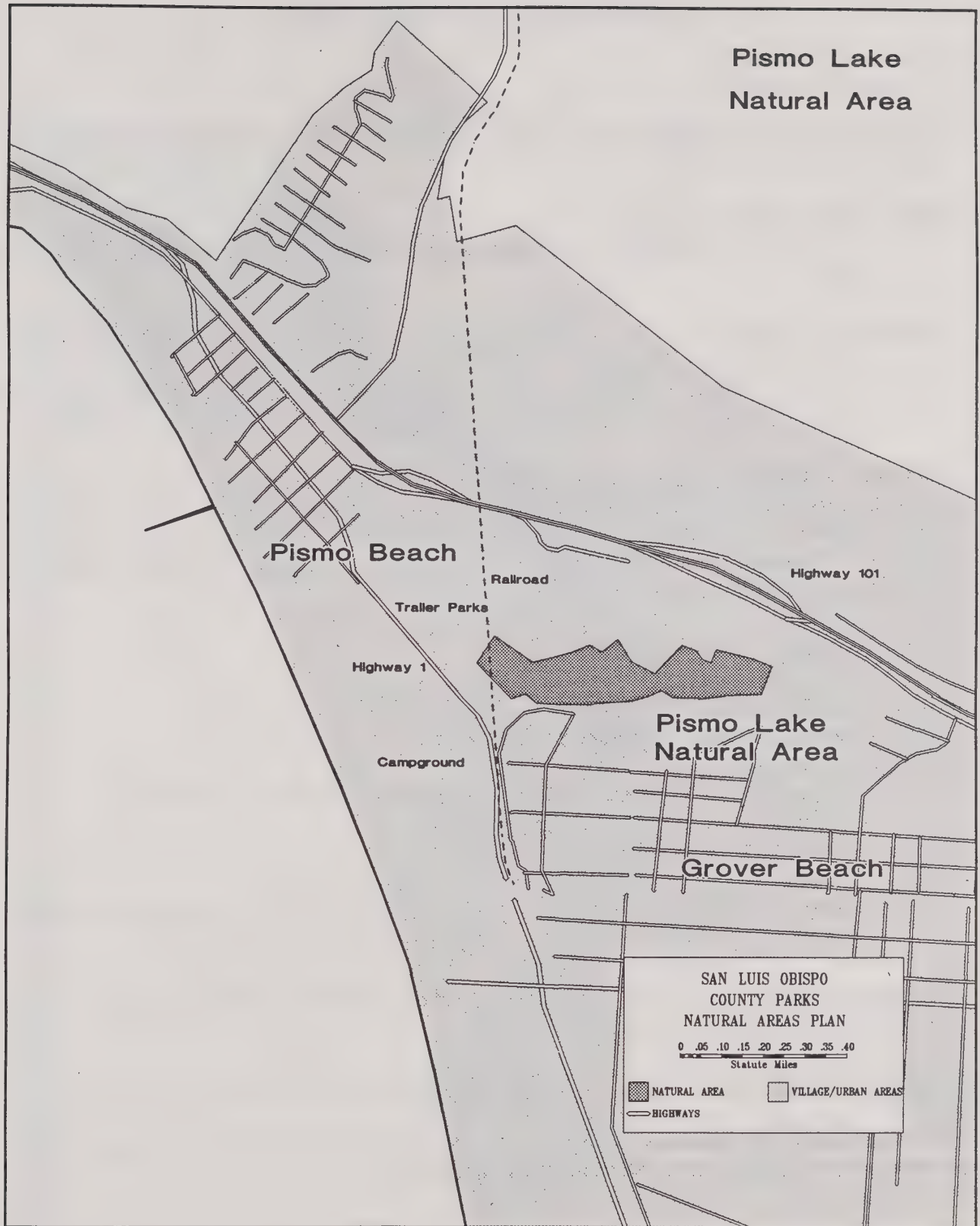
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- ☐ 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Cooperative agreement with Dept. of Fish & Game and adjacent communities to provide limited visitor serving development consistent with habitat protection. Improved signs, fencing, access trails, view points.

Management Restrictions: Public access should be controlled by docent or Department led walks.

Other Pertinent Information: Coastal Resource Conservation District provided funding for Department of Fish and Game to restore lagoon. Small parcel on Fourth Street should be acquired to permit public access into preserve.



BIG SANDY NATURAL AREA

Location: Northeast of San Miguel at San Luis Obispo County line with some acreage in southern Monterey County

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: California Department of Fish and Game and County of SLO

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 735 Acres

Private Lands: 300-600 acres, between three landowners. Development will dedicate 12 acres to County of San Luis Obispo

Description: Riparian habitat on the Salinas River. Two landowners between the San Luis Obispo County property and Big Sandy, one landowner immediately south of San Luis Obispo County property in San Miguel. Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

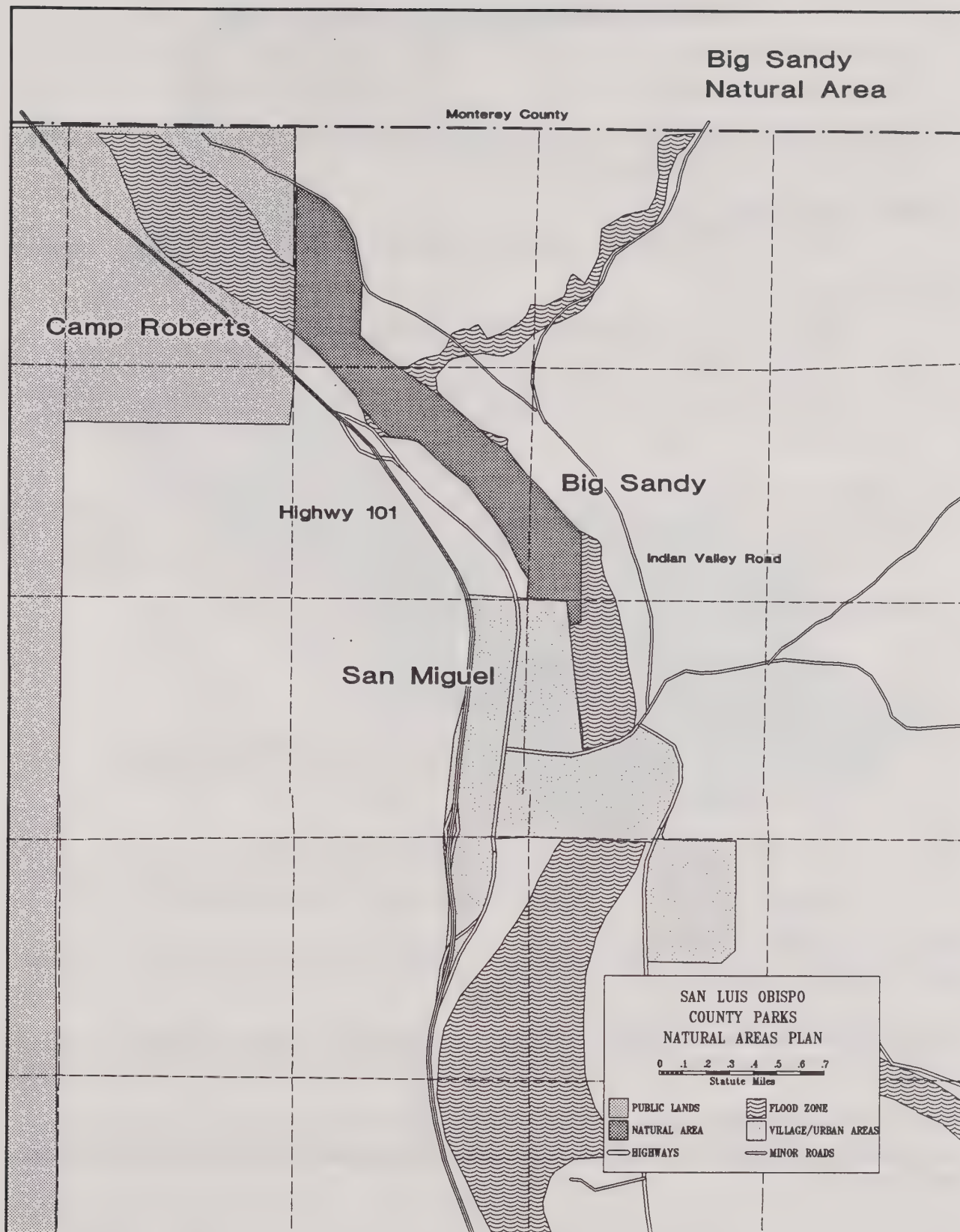
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- ☐ 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- ☐ 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- ☐ 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: To protect the wildlife values of the Salinas River Corridor. Erosion control and restoration of riparian corridor.

Management Restrictions: Limit access for off highway vehicles

Other Pertinent Information: Access and staging areas could be provided at County owned property in San Miguel and at Big Sandy Wildlife Area.



WEST IRISH HILLS NATURAL PARK

Location: South of Montaña de Oro and east of Diablo Canyon Power Plant, the southernmost point of the coast range's geomorphic province.

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management and The Nature Conservancy

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Several large parcels, approximately 1200-1500 acres.

Private Lands: Various. Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition (noted on map within diagonal lines). Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

Description: Rugged area which provides a variety of plant communities including the coastal sage scrub, coast live oak, Bishop pines and limited areas of riparian habitat. As many as nine state or federally listed rare, threatened or endangered animal species may occur in this area.

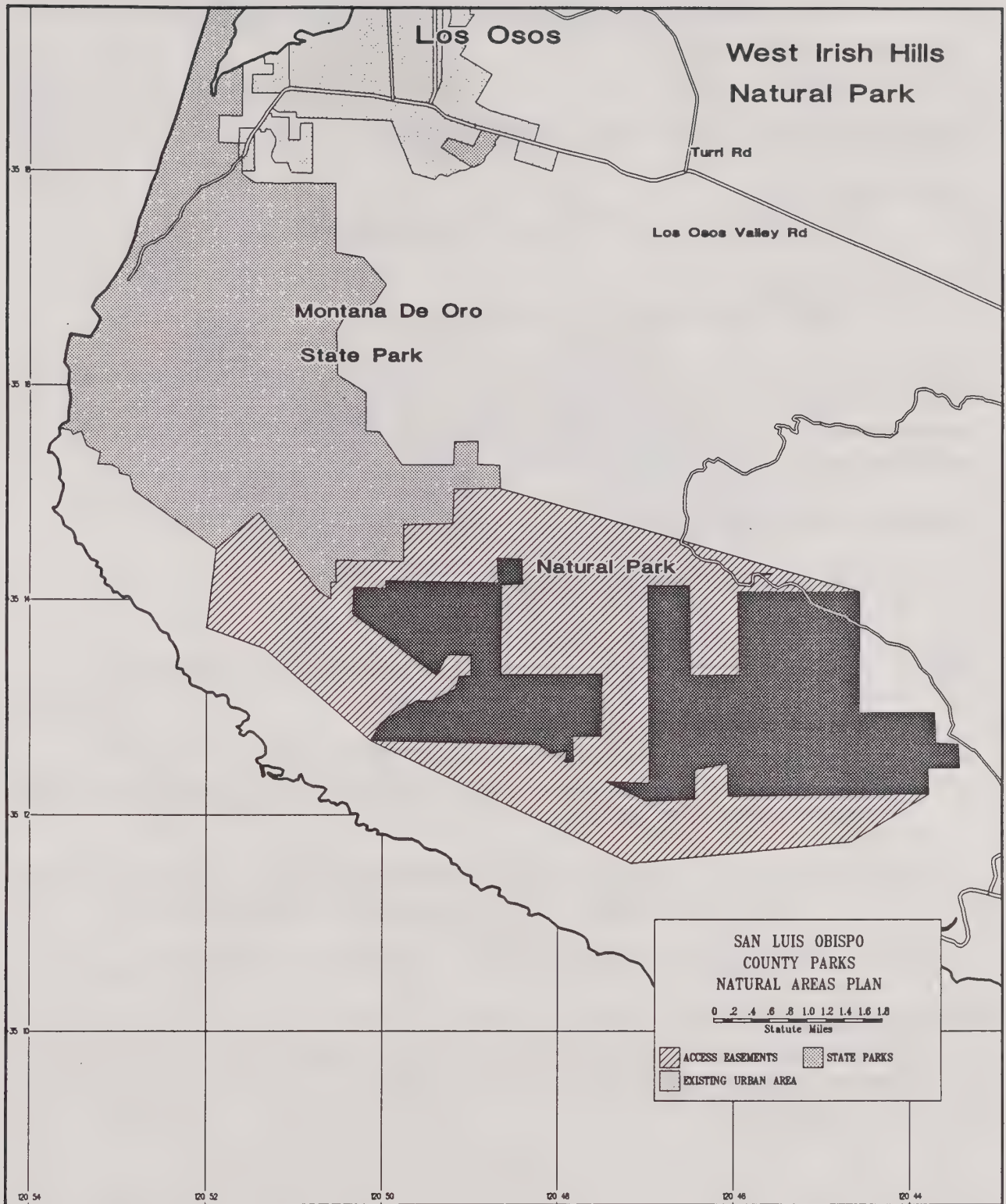
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- ☐ 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Passive recreation consistent with habitat protection. Trail access from Avila Beach to Montaña de Oro State Park.

Management Restrictions: Restricted access due to periods of extreme fire hazard. Proximity to Diablo Canyon Power Plant requires careful access development and site management plan.

Other Pertinent Information: Depending on acquisitions of private lands, property could be an extension of Montaña de Oro State Park. If so, management of the area by State should be considered.



CYPRESS MOUNTAIN NATURAL PARK

Location: Santa Lucia Range south of Nacimiento Reservoir

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 1,000 acres

Description: Large cypress groves, several rare and endemic plant species, and other unique ecological conditions. Landlocked from public access by large private parcel. A spring provides water for a varied animal population; there are particularly abundant reptile and amphibian populations in the more moist areas.

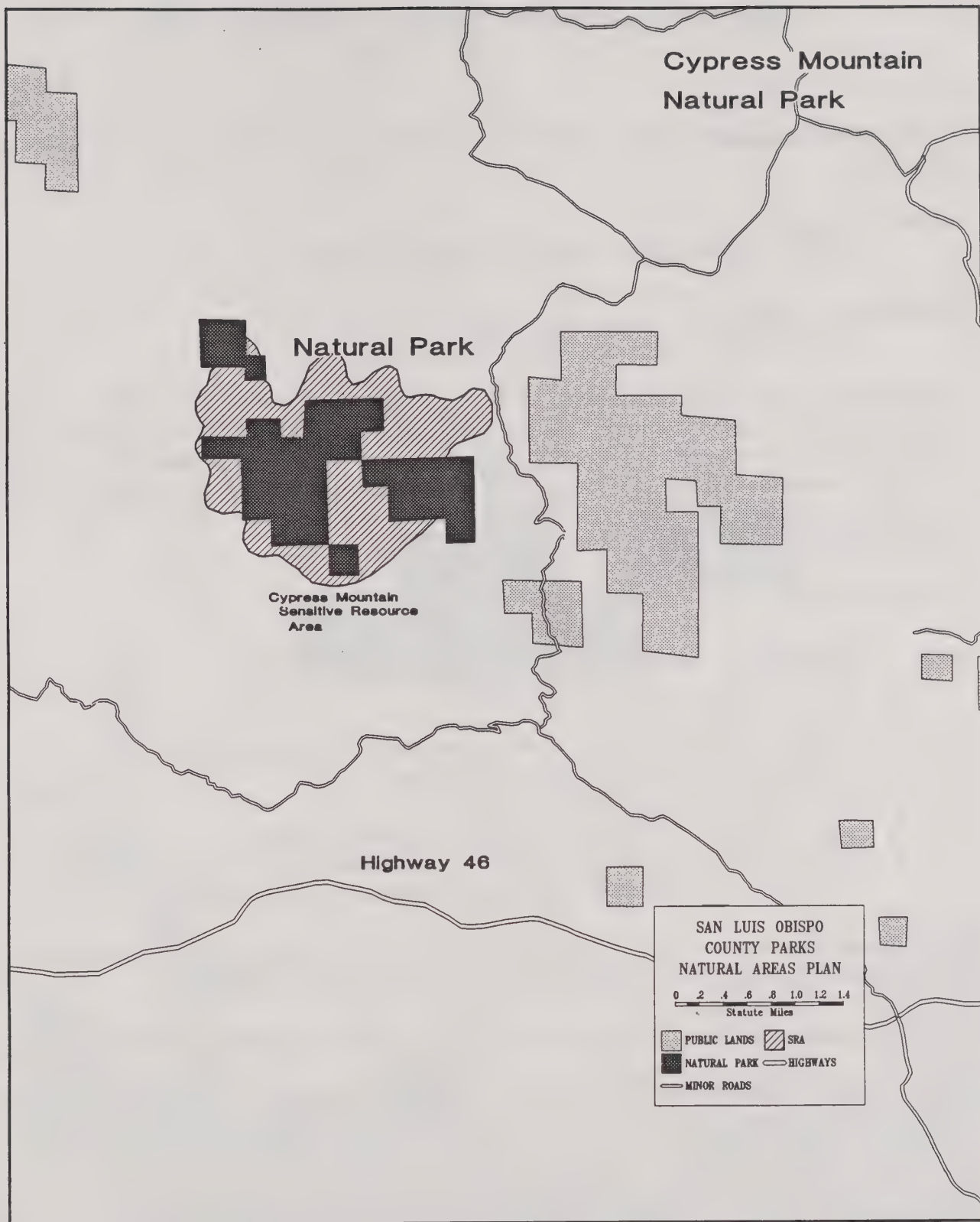
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- ☐ 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Joint management agreement with Bureau of Land Management to provide public access for passive recreation, nature study and habitat protection.

Management Restrictions: Restricted access due to periods of extreme fire hazard.

Other Pertinent Information: Access is limited as the public lands are landlocked by a large private parcel. Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.



TIERRA REDONDA MOUNTAIN NATURAL PARK

Location: Situated near the San Luis Obispo / Monterey County line north of Nacimiento Reservoir.

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 1,300 acres

Description: Tierra Redonda is a broad, table-top mountain with precipitous slopes. Several small, intermittent creeks originate near the crest. There are Native American artifacts and remains on the mountain top. Natural communities include grassland, savannah, chaparral, limestone streamside habitat, sand dunes and marshlands, as well as the predominant oak woodland community. One of the largest concentrations of *Chorizanthe* species in the world is found in this area.

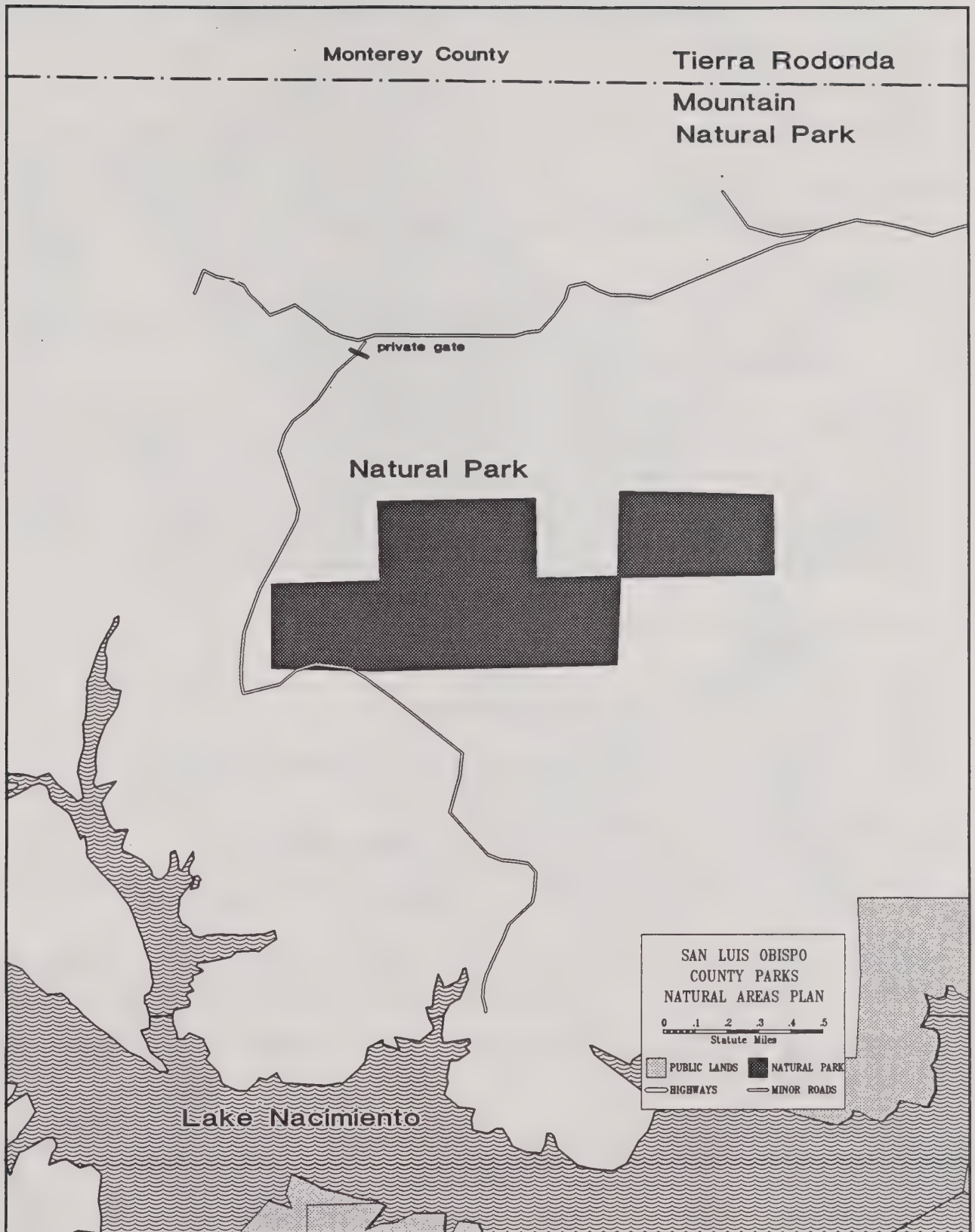
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- ☐ 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Joint management agreement with Bureau of Land Management to provide public access for passive recreation, nature study and habitat protection.

Management Restrictions: Restricted access due to periods of extreme fire hazard.

Other Pertinent Information: Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.



ROCKY CANYON NATURAL PARK

Location: East of the City of Atascadero

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 2,000 acres

Private Lands: Several owners of large parcels which would provide access have expressed an interest in easements, acquisition, etc.

Description: The California Native Plant Society has identified several plant species in the area which are on the CNPS List for Endangered Species. The area is rich in wildlife including a large population of mountain lions and raptors. Isolated deep canyon locations feature the oak/digger pine community. Public land is landlocked by private ownership. Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

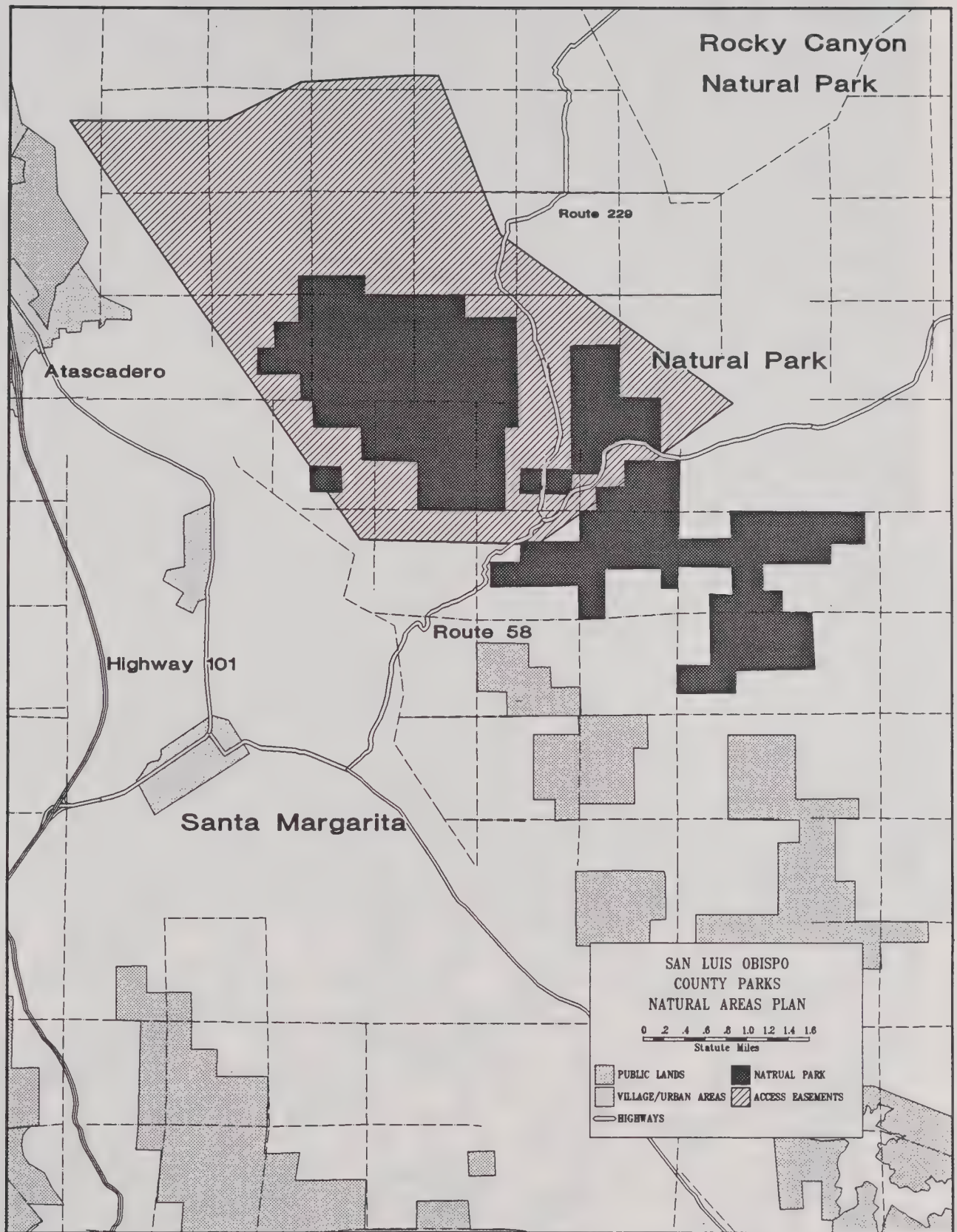
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Joint management agreement with Bureau of Land Management to provide access for passive recreation, nature study, habitat protection and restoration of area.

Management Restrictions: Limit access of off-highway vehicles. Restrict access due to periods of extreme fire hazard.

Other Pertinent Information: Majority of land was burned in a 1989 fire. Restoration of native chaparral should be a primary consideration.





PRIVATE LANDS WILLING SELLER/DEDICATION



ELFIN FOREST NATURAL AREA

Location: Southernmost area of Morro Bay Estuary

Public Lands: No

Approximate Acreage:

Private Lands: 38.69 acres

Description: A diverse and complex assemblage of natural plant communities including coastal brackish marsh, riparian woodland fringe, pygmy oak woodland, grassland, coastal dune scrub and oak manzanita association. Supports a documented 25 species of mammals, over 110 kinds of birds, and 11 species of reptiles and amphibians.

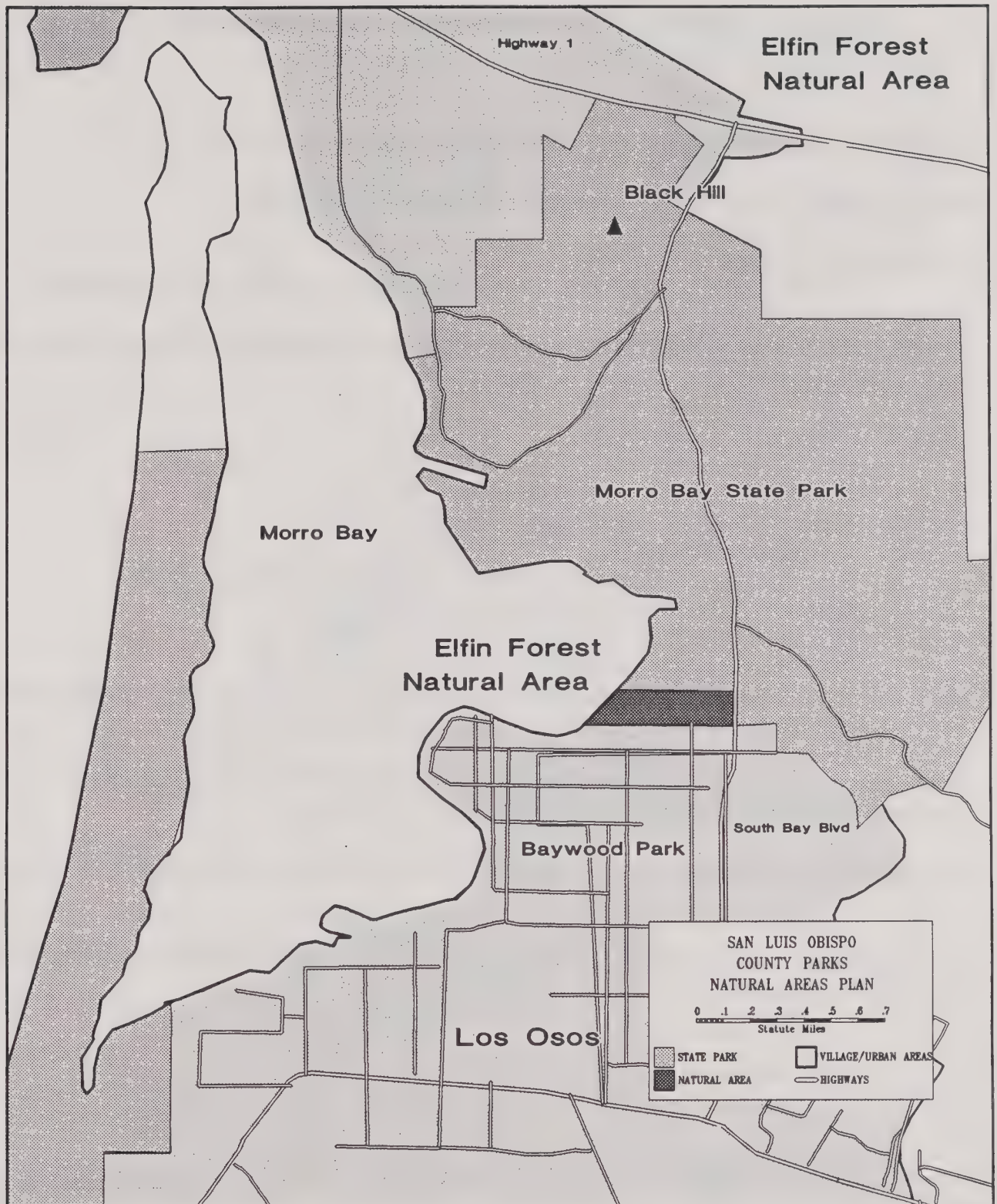
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- ☐ 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation of archeological sites, habitat protection and passive recreation.

Management Restrictions: Public access limited to foot traffic only. May require fencing to protect native species from domestic predators.

Other Pertinent Information: A grant has been submitted to partially fund the purchase.



TEMPLETON COMMUNITY GREENWAYS

Location: Templeton; main section near Las Tablas and Bethel Roads

Public Lands: No; future dedication as a condition of development.

Approximate Acreage:

Private Lands: 35-50 acres will be dedicated as a condition of development.

Description: The land is highlighted by rolling hills of exotic grasslands and ancient valley oaks with some small sections of riparian habitat.

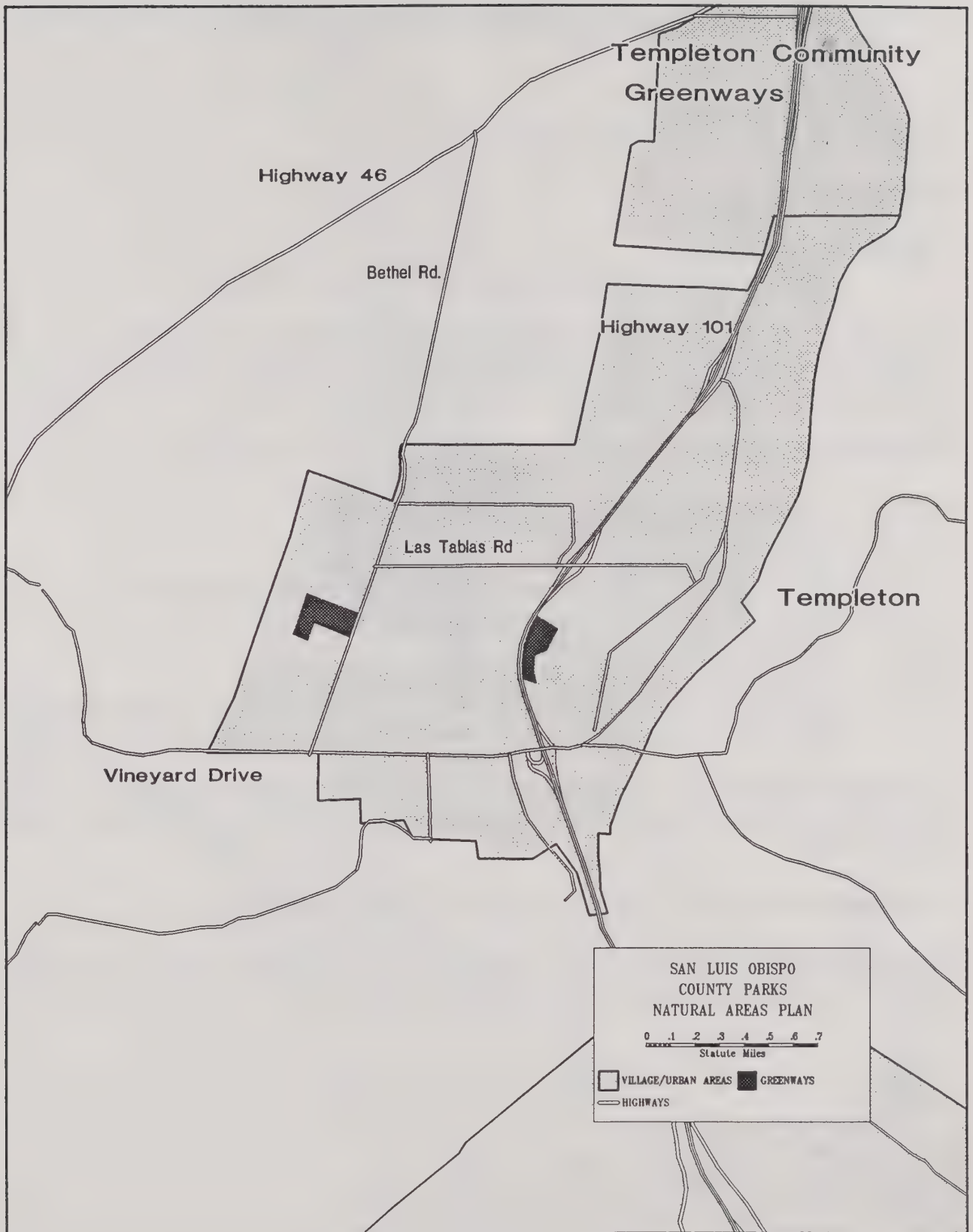
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- ☐ 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- ☒ 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- ☒ 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- ☒ 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☒ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- ☐ 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- ☐ 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: To provide habitat protection and public access. Reduce grazing and eliminate from riparian zones. Re-introduction of Valley Oaks.

Management Restrictions: Due to size of parcels, fencing should be considered to control access.

Other Pertinent Information: Mow strips should be cut in late spring along urbanized fringe for wildfire control.



PRICE CANYON NATURAL PARK

Location: East of the City of Pismo Beach

Public Lands: No

Approximate Acreage:

Private Lands: Shell Oil property, approximately 1552 acres.

Description: Contains a variety of communities including riparian along Pismo Creek, oak woodlands and grasslands. Potentially harbors a variety of rare plants which only grow in the presence of oil or oil shale. Numerous roads to oil sites provide opportunities for use as trails.

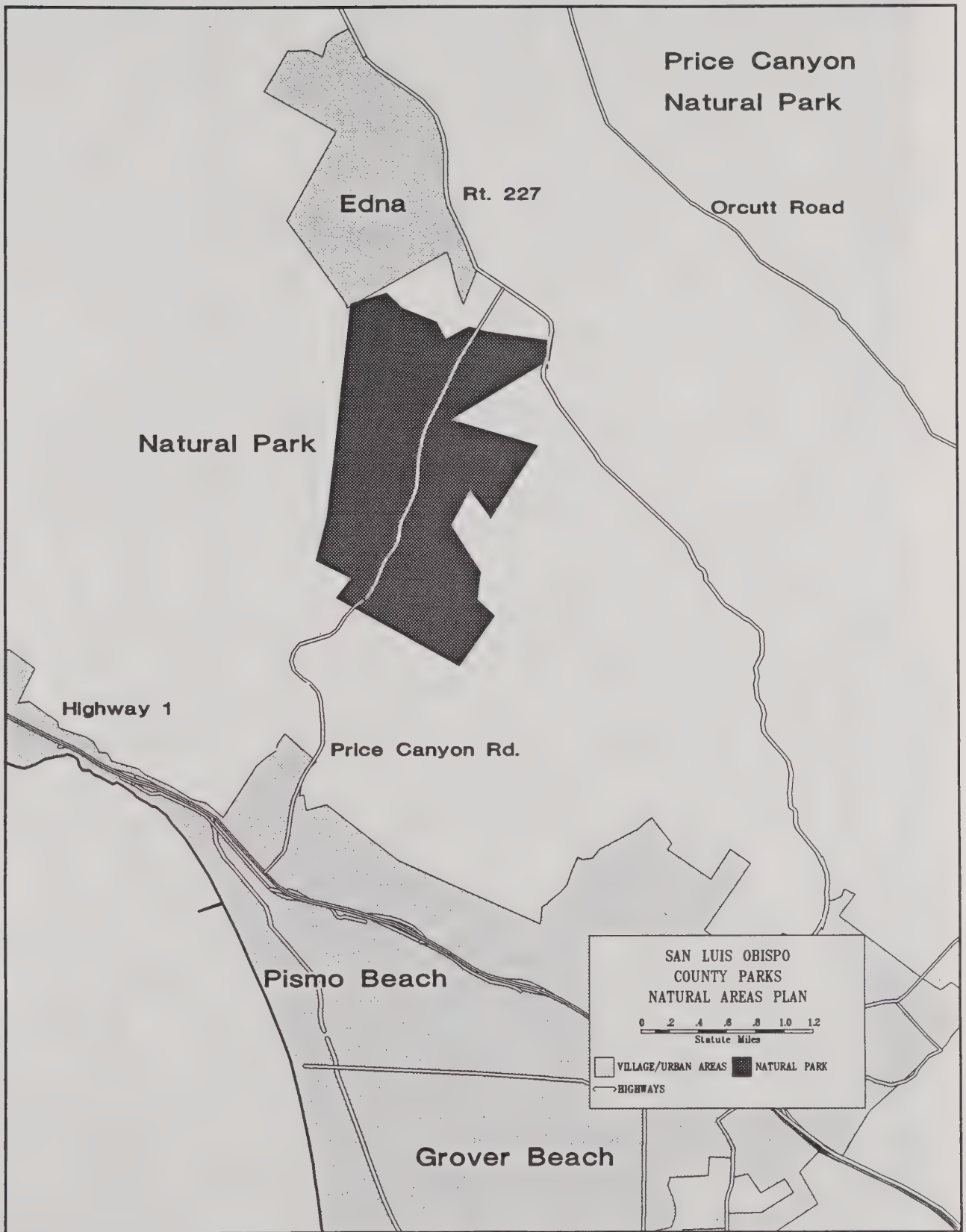
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
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- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- ☐ 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- ☐ 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Restoration of native environment, habitat protection and passive recreation opportunities. Because of oil activities, environmental education should be a major consideration.

Management Restrictions: Restrict and control off-highway vehicle use.

Other Pertinent Information: Toxic waste removal will be a major consideration. Forty to sixty areas of property should be segregated and developed for more intensive park activities.





SIGNIFICANT BIOLOGICAL, GEOGRAPHIC, OR RIPARIAN HABITAT

The following list of proposed Natural Area sites is intended to identify critical habitat types or geographic features which merit preservation. The proposals are not site specific. In each case, sites based on these criteria should be identified and explored for preservation, using public lands whenever possible.



THE MORROS NATURAL AREAS

Location: 12 mile east/west stretch of land from San Luis Obispo to Morro Bay

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Cal Poly, Camp San Luis, Cuesta Community College, California National Guard, San Luis Obispo County.

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 2,500 acres

Private Lands: Various. Conservation and access easements to public lands should be explored if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

Description: A unique continuous stretch of volcanic peaks forming a divider between Los Osos Valley and Chorro Valley, which extends from Islay Hill to Morro Rock. Sparsely populated and mostly used for grazing, dry farming, and irrigated field crops on the level areas.

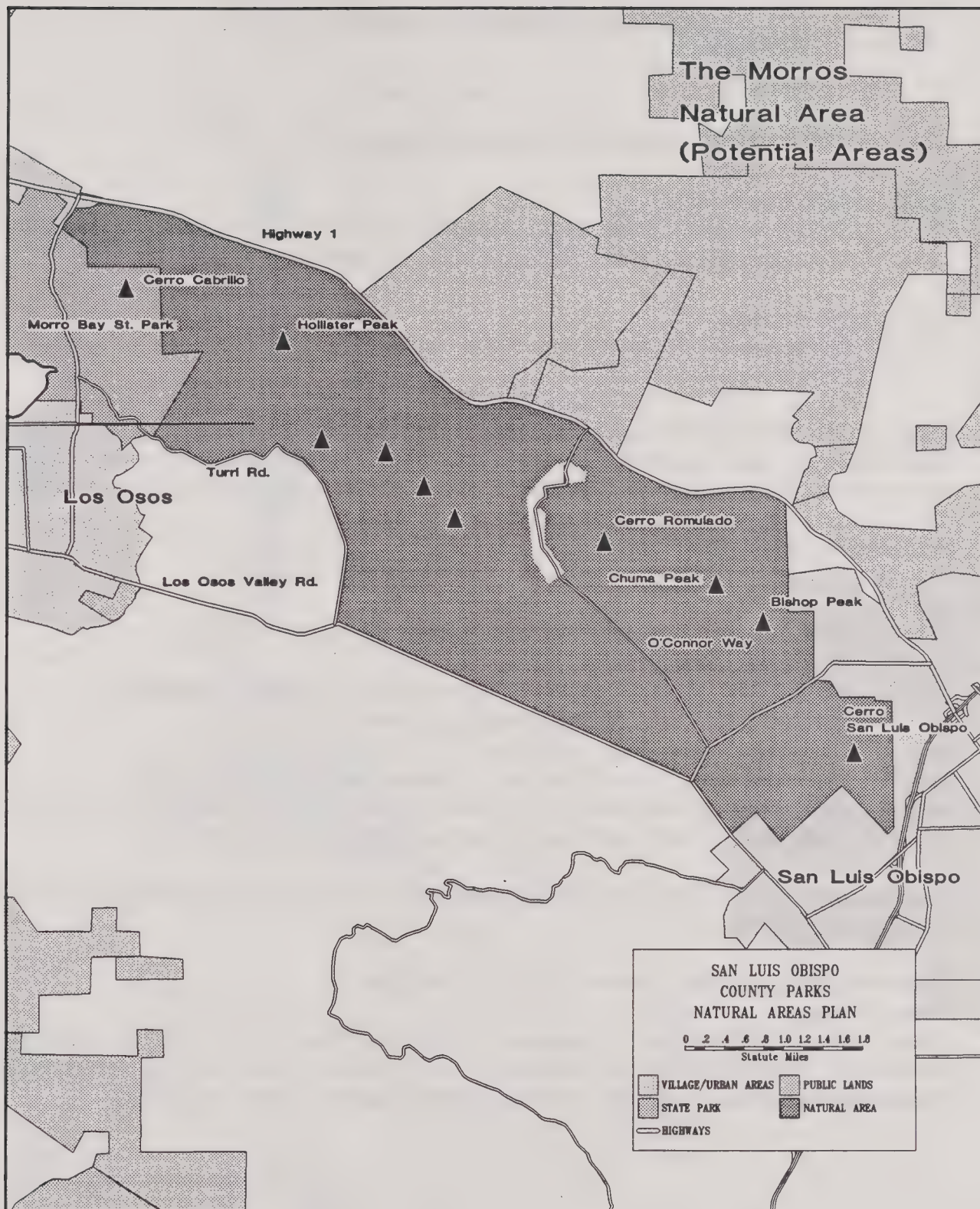
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- ☐ 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Restoration and preservation of native habitat, environmental education and passive recreation. Public agencies should be encouraged to open their lands to public access. Long range goal is the protection and public management of The Morros and eventual establishment of an integrated Morros Natural Park.

Management Restrictions: Protection of adjacent agricultural operations. Control access to restrict off-highway vehicles. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas. Public access should be restricted to those lands open to public use.

Other Pertinent Information: Efforts must be coordinated with the several other agencies involved in protection of The Morros.



SALINAS RIVER NATURAL AREAS

Location: Dam at Santa Margarita Lake north to County line.

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Calif. Department of Fish and Game, City of Atascadero, Atascadero Mutual Water District, Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 1000+ acres

Private Lands: Various

Description: Dominant community is riparian. The corridor is a mixed bag of public and private ownership which creates access restrictions. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

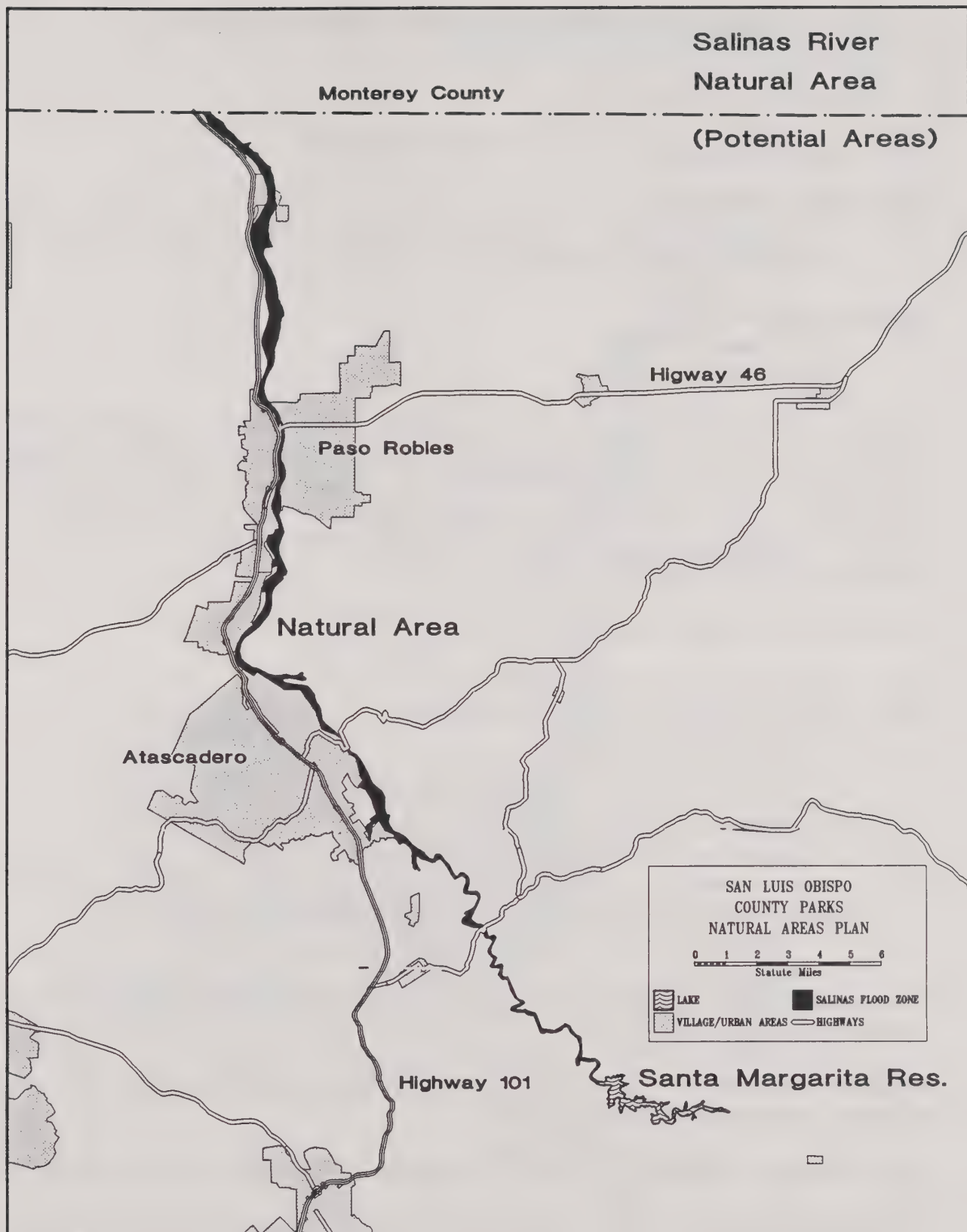
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
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- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Restoration and protection of riparian habitat, environmental education and passive recreation.

Management Restrictions: Control off-highway vehicles.

Other Pertinent Information: A Resource Management Plan is in progress by the Resource Conservation District, Soils Conservation Service, National Parks Service Rivers, Trails Conservation Assistance Program, County Parks, and various private landholders.



SAN LUIS OBISPO CREEK NATURAL AREAS

Location: From the City of San Luis Obispo to Pacific Ocean

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: City of San Luis Obispo, County of San Luis Obispo, Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Various

Private Lands: Various

Description: The 18 mile stream flows live year round from its headwaters below Cuesta Ridge to its ocean confluence at Avila Beach. Excellent examples of riparian habitat. Also supports the southernmost population of steelhead in California. Many agencies and projects are involved with the creek. City of San Luis Obispo should be lead agency within their jurisdiction. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

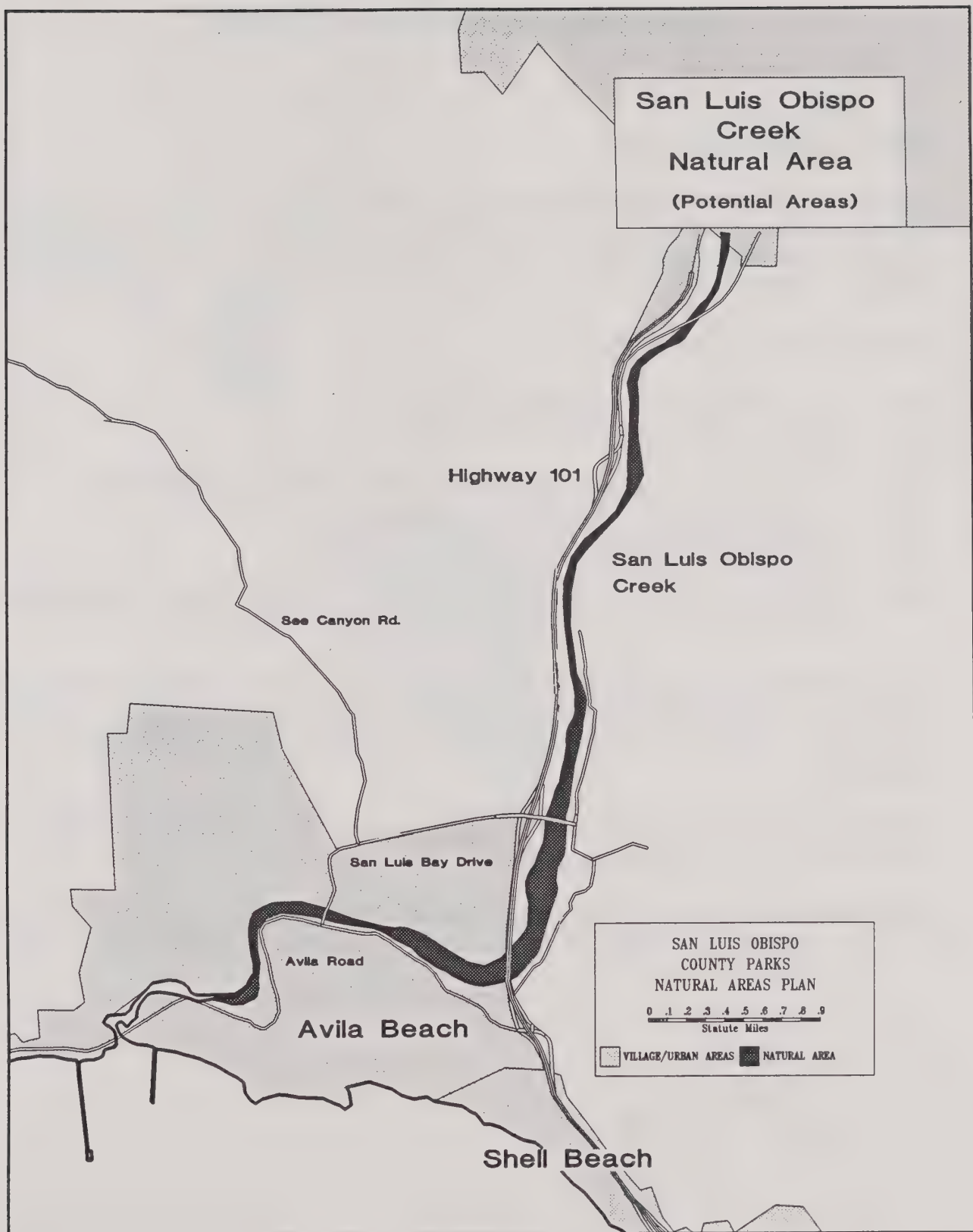
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Restoration and protection of riparian habitat, environmental education and passive recreation opportunities.

Management Restrictions: Foot traffic only. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas.

Other Pertinent Information: Efforts should coordinate with San Luis Obispo Creek Task Force.



MONTEREY PINE NATURAL AREAS

Location: Cambria, various sites

Description: This grove extends from direct ocean influence zones to the drier interior uplands, and gene variations occur within this range. The various microhabitats within the forest include a number of rare and endemic species. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

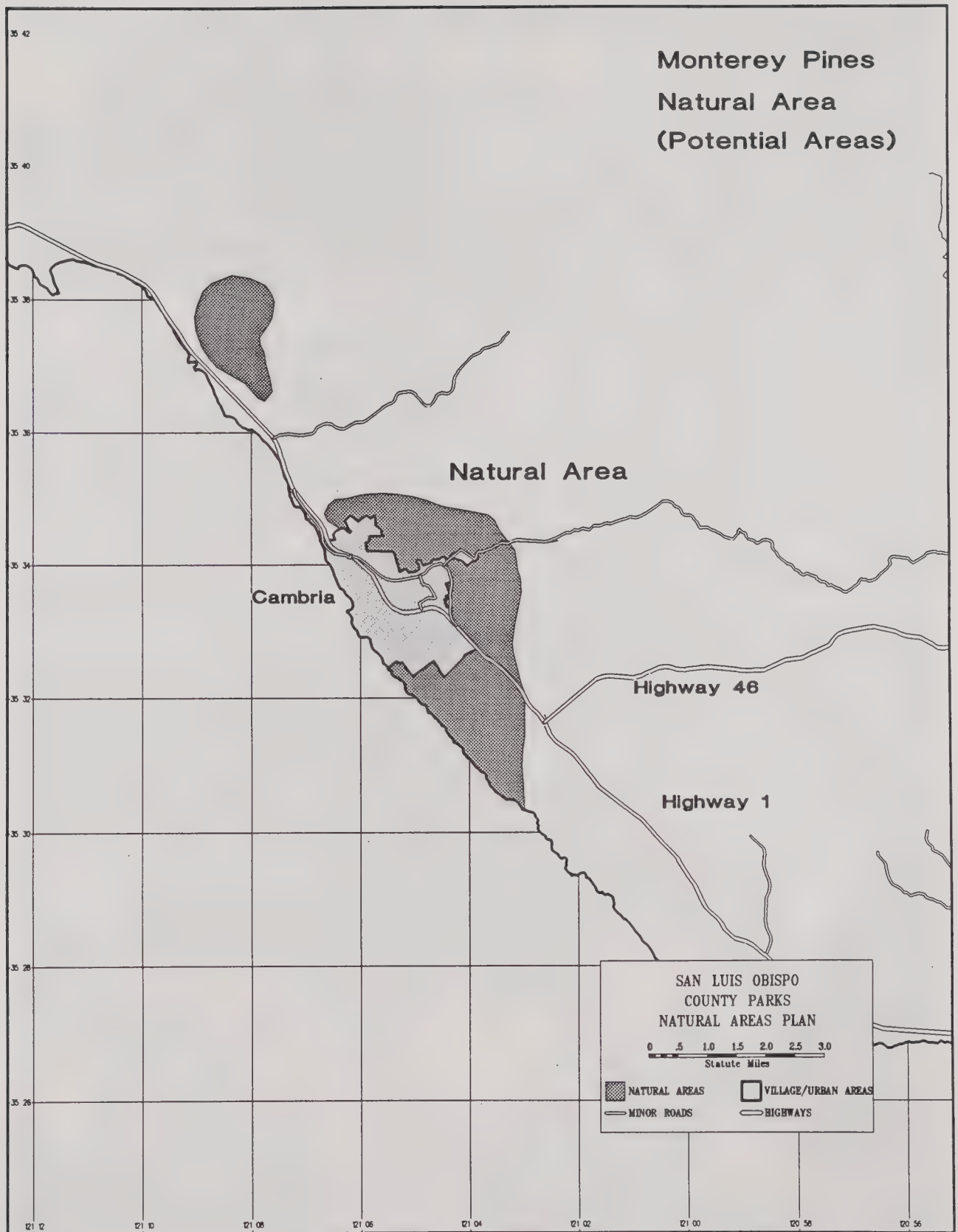
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- ☐ 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation management of native groves, passive recreation and nature study. Removal of non-native species. Environmental education on this major habitat is important. Emphasis should be placed on managing the entire ecological system of this habitat type.

Management Restrictions: Public use should be restricted to activities associated with environmental education and nature study.

Other Pertinent Information: Coordinate site identification with Green Space land trust, Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County and County Department of Planning and Building.



MONARCH BUTTERFLY NATURAL AREAS

Location: Various locations

Description: Groves of trees used as over-wintering sites for Monarch butterflies, critical to the survival of western U.S. populations of this species. Potential sites in San Simeon near Sebastian's Store and on the Nipomo Mesa. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- ☐ 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- ☐ 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- ☐ 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation of wintering sites, passive recreation and nature study. Environmental education on this important species and associated habitat.

Management Restrictions: Public use should be restricted to activities associated with environmental education and nature study.

Other Pertinent Information: Coordinate site identification with County Department of Planning and Building and California Department of Fish and Game.



OAK WOODLAND NATURAL AREAS

Location: Various locations, especially near Huasna and Adelaide

Description: These two areas contain vast stands of native oaks, for the most part undisturbed by urbanization. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

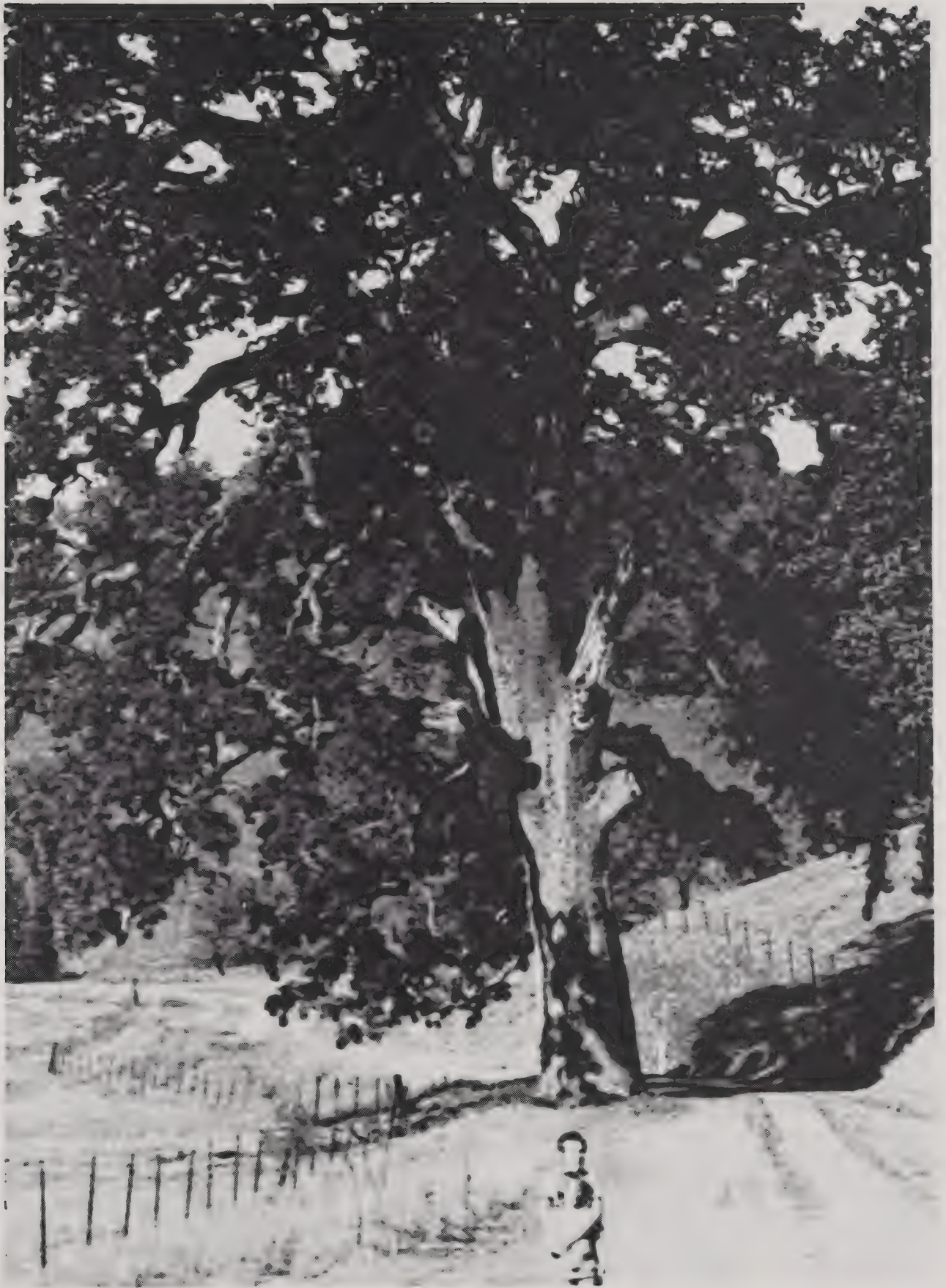
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation management of native oak groves, passive recreation and nature study. Removal of non-native species. Environmental education on this important habitat.

Management Restrictions: Public use should be restricted to activities associated with environmental education and nature study.

Other Pertinent Information: Coordinate site identification with County Cooperative Extension and Department of Planning and Building.



COASTAL NATURAL AREAS

Location: Various locations

Description: California's coastal zone contains a variety of unique habitat types, diverse biological species and majestic scenic vistas. The threat to these sensitive coastal zones continues, despite statewide preservation measures. Of particular concern are intertidal pools and estuaries. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- ☐ 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- ☐ 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation management of sensitive habitats, passive recreation and nature study. Removal of non-native species. Environmental education on this important region.

Management Restrictions: Public use should be restricted to activities associated with environmental education and nature study.

Other Pertinent Information: Coordinate site identification with County Cooperative Extension and Department of Planning and Building.



APPENDIX C: AGRICULTURE MAPPING CRITERIA

Agriculture

The Agriculture designation in this plan includes several different cropland associations and grazing lands that are individually and collectively important to the local agricultural economy. Sources of data used in mapping these lands include the State Department of Water Resources land use maps, State Department of Conservation Important Farmland Series maps, U.S. Soil Conservation Service soils maps (land capability rating and potential use of soils), U.S. Geological Survey maps (topography and vegetation), LUE official maps (land use categories, natural hazards, and parcel sizes), Assessor's maps and records (property ownership), and Department of Planning and Building maps of properties subject to land conservation contracts.

The following are the general parameters used in mapping lands in the Agriculture designation.

- A. Agricultural Preserves.** All agricultural preserves subject to land conservation contracts are designated Agriculture in this plan. Since the use and capability of some of those lands are limited, they might otherwise be included in different designations in this plan and in the LUE. However, such properties are committed to development restrictions for 10 to 20 years unless notices of nonrenewal are in effect to terminate contracts within a shorter term. Upon termination of contracts, the appropriate LUE and Agriculture and Open Space Element designations will be evaluated through the general plan amendment process to determine if some other designation is appropriate.

An exception to this mapping of agricultural lands is for land holdings owned by non-profit land conservation organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, where the land is managed to protect open space resources. Such lands are mapped as Multi-Use Public Lands.

- B. Agricultural Use.** Areas of the county characterized by a mixture of agricultural and non-agricultural uses are mapped according to the predominant land use. For example, rural subdivisions under single ownership and farmed as a unit may be designated Agriculture. In addition, scattered parcels smaller than the applicable minimum parcel size for new land divisions in the Agriculture category of the LUE which are within a larger agricultural area may be designated Agriculture if necessary to maintain the agricultural integrity of an area. However, rural subdivisions of individually-owned lots that are too small for viable agricultural uses are typically designated Small-Lot Rural in this plan.

Specialized animal facilities such as horse ranches and poultry ranches and non-soil dependent uses such as greenhouses may be designated Agriculture if the underlying

parcels meet the criteria for that designation. Specialized animal facilities and non-soil dependent uses may often be shorter-term uses than other agricultural uses. Consequently, appropriate parcel sizes for future land divisions should be based on the land's existing and potential use for long-term crop and grazing production, rather than the specialized uses.

C. Land Capability. The Soil Conservation Service land capability rating of soils (Classes I through VIII) generally reflects the quality of soils for various agricultural uses. However, it is primarily an index of the level of soil conservation problems, such as erosion. Consequently, the individual soils descriptions should be reviewed to determine potential agricultural uses for an area. Also, soils mapping has limitations of scale. A soil for which grazing is indicated as the best use may contain smaller areas suitable for farming. On the other hand, soils described as farmland may contain small areas unsuitable for farming. The land capability ratings may be periodically updated by the Soil Conservation Service. When that occurs, the mapping in this plan should be reviewed and revised as appropriate through a general plan amendment.

D. Location. Location is a consideration in mapping Agriculture. Many areas with limited agricultural potential which are distant from urban areas are designated Agriculture if used primarily for grazing. For example, large areas of the southeastern county have a very limited livestock carrying capacity because of the arid climate and sparse vegetation; yet, the area is so distant from urban centers that the Agriculture designation may be appropriate if the land is primarily used for grazing.

Following is a description of the subcategories of the Agriculture designation in this plan and the criteria used to classify lands in those subcategories of Agriculture.

A. Irrigated Lands

1. ROW CROP TERRAIN AND SOILS. These areas support the most intensive farming operations, involve labor-intensive practices with above normal traffic and extensive use of equipment and chemicals, are often close to populated areas, and need special recognition to assure that farming will continue. Row crop terrain and soils has the following characteristics:

- a. Existing and potential agricultural uses include various types of vegetables, seed crops, orchards, and other irrigated specialty crops. In valley bottom lands, uses include irrigated field crops and other uses reflecting farmer preference where there is potential for conversion to row crops.
- b. Property sizes generally range from 10 acres to hundreds of acres, but contiguous properties as small as five acres may be included where used for high value, labor-intensive specialty uses such as strawberries or

soil-dependent greenhouses. Small intervening properties are included in order to maintain the agricultural integrity of these farmland areas.

- c. Topography consists of valley bottom lands with slopes generally between 0 and 5 percent.
- d. Soils consist mostly of land capability Classes I and II, but may include some Class III land that has been traditionally used or is currently used for row crop production. Small areas consisting of soils in other land capability classes may be included because they are impractical to map in other categories.
- e. Climate is varied, but the most extensive and productive lands are the coastal valleys where year-round moderate temperatures allow multiple cropping. Interior valley bottom lands with superior soils and agricultural water supplies are important for possible future conversion from field crops to row crops.
- f. Water is derived from underlying groundwater basins and is typically applied by row, sprinkler or drip irrigation.

2. SPECIALTY CROPS AND FORAGE LANDS. The lands in this classification require sprinkler or drip irrigation and are primarily used for grapes, avocados and apples. This classification also includes irrigated uses such as alfalfa or irrigated pasture where the land is also suitable for orchards and vineyards. Crops can be grown on moderate slopes with seasonal labor requirements. The location of specialty crops and forage lands is determined by availability of water and climatic conditions. Orchard and vineyard production is characterized by the need for large amounts of capital with several years delay but high return on the investment. Crops are grown on a broad range of parcel sizes. Specialty crops and forage lands have the following characteristics:

- a. Agricultural uses include irrigated orchards and vineyards such as wine grapes, avocados, citrus, and apples. Also included are irrigated uses such as alfalfa and pasture on gently rolling lands that are also suitable for irrigated orchards and vineyards. Some areas that were primarily used for irrigated field crops have developed with scattered orchards and vineyards. However, not all areas of irrigated field crops will be converted to orchards and vineyards. One reason is that feed crops are commonly associated with livestock operations on the same property.
- b. Property sizes generally range from 20 acres to a few hundred acres, but smaller properties used for high value crop production are also included.

- c. Topography is gently rolling and rolling on slopes between 5 and 30 percent.
- d. Soils consist mostly of Land Capability Classes III and IV.
- e. Climate imposes varied requirements for different types of crops. For example, subtropical fruits are limited to areas with a temperate coastal climate and deciduous fruits and nuts are generally better suited to the interior with its sunny hot summers and cold winters.
- f. Water is derived from groundwater sources and is applied either by drip or sprinkler irrigation.
- g. Economics, new agricultural techniques and grower preference are other factors which determine the location of various specialty crops.

B. Dry Farm Lands

Dry farm lands includes a broad range of properties that are primarily cultivated for an annual crop, but includes some orchard operations. Parcels are normally large in order to be productive units. Farming activities are seasonal with a moderate amount of labor and a considerable investment in farm machinery. Dry farm lands are divided into two types of croplands, mixed croplands and dry croplands.

1. MIXED CROPLANDS

Mixed croplands consist of two different types of terrain and crop associations. One type of mixed cropland is found in valleys with good soils but insufficient water for major irrigated uses. Such areas are characterized by mixed agricultural uses such as scattered irrigated crops and dry farm grain and hay. The other type of mixed cropland is found in areas of higher than average rainfall such as the easterly slopes of the Santa Lucia Range where dry farm orchards and some vineyards occur. Mixed croplands have the following characteristics:

- a. Agricultural uses include dry farm orchards and vineyards and specialty or high value field crops such as almonds and walnuts.
- b. Property sizes generally range from 40 acres to several hundred acres.
- c. Topography ranges from flat to rolling on slopes between 0 and 30 percent.
- d. Soils consist mostly of Land Capability Classes III and IV.

- e. Climate is most important with regard to rainfall. For example, dry farm almond orchards are best situated in areas of the county with an average annual rainfall exceeding 12 inches. Dry years or spring frosts can result in very poor harvests. Higher rainfall areas contain substantial intervening areas of dense woodland on steeper slopes.
- f. The location is confined to areas of existing production, since such crops as dry farm almonds and walnuts are not anticipated to expand significantly.

2. DRY CROPLANDS

Dry croplands have the following characteristics:

- a. Agricultural uses include grain and hay production, which is widespread in the northeastern part of the county. Barley, wheat and oat hay are the principal crops. Other crops include dry beans and safflower.
- b. Property sizes generally range from 80 acres to several thousand acres.
- c. Topography is flat to rolling on slopes between 0 and 30 percent.
- d. Soils consist mostly of Land Capability Classes III and IV. Class VI land has also been commonly used for grain and hay production.
- e. The amount and distribution of rainfall is very important. Areas with higher rainfall can usually produce a crop every year. The more arid portions of the county may require two or three-year summer fallow crop rotation practices.
- f. The location includes areas of predominant dry farm grain and hay production. Grain stubble fields and intervening non-cultivated areas provide seasonal forage for livestock.

C. Rangelands for Grazing

Grazing lands account for a large percentage of privately-owned land in the county. Cattle ranching is the predominant use on these lands, which have the following characteristics:

1. Property sizes generally range from 100 acres to thousands of acres.
2. Topography is mostly rolling and steep on slopes between 30 and 75 percent. Small intervening valleys and ridgetops that have limited use or potential as farmland are also included.
3. Soils consist mostly of Land Capability Classes IV, VI and VII, but also contain small intervening areas of other land capability classes.
4. The amount and distribution of rainfall is very important for production of grasses and forbs grazed by livestock. The best grazing lands occur on open hillsides on the coastal side of the Santa Lucia Range, while some of the less productive grazing lands are in arid areas in the southeast portion of the county.
5. Natural vegetation consists mostly of grasses and forbs in open to moderately wooded terrain. Large areas of dense woodland, chaparral or barren lands are excluded unless they are part of large operating ranches and/or are located in agricultural preserves.
6. The location is widespread and depends mainly upon property size and quality of land for grazing. Marginal grazing lands located near urban areas are generally not included in Agriculture.

APPENDIX D: AGRICULTURAL BUFFER POLICIES

The following ag buffer policies have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Agricultural Commissioner through the county's land use planning programs to:

1. Promote and protect agriculture
2. Protect the public's health and safety
3. Provide the Board of Supervisors and City Councils with technical information and assistance in dealing with land use compatibility and capability issues affecting agriculture.

This is accomplished through the review of certain land use proposals in/or near agricultural areas and providing recommended mitigational measures where necessary.

Objectives

1. The department will make a determination of "significant land use conflict" on project referrals. The basis for the determination will also be provided.
2. Recommended mitigation measures will be provided if a significant land use conflict determination is made.

Land Use Compatibility Issues and Mitigation Benefits

1. Pesticide Use
 - A. Provides for a margin of safety for the public and sensitive non-target areas.
 - B. Reduces the need for spray buffers or other governmental restrictions which negatively impact agriculture.
 - C. Helps maintain the feasibility of pesticide use as an alternative for sustainable agriculture.

2. Noise

- A. Reduces the potential for nuisance from a variety of agricultural sources such as bird frightening devices, pumps, heavy equipment, wind machines, etc.
- B. Reduces local neighbor conflict and complaints to governmental agencies.
- C. Reduces the disturbance from noise and light associated with night harvesting.

3. Dust

- A. Creates distance or screening for dust to settle out before affecting homes or people.

4. Trespass/Vandalism/Theft/Litter/Liability

- A. Helps reduce the potential negative impact that people and pets can have on agricultural property.

5. Rodent Control

- A. Helps maintain the use of agricultural rodent control materials which may be otherwise prohibited in close proximity to homes, schools, and other urban areas.
- B. Reduces the likelihood of accidental poisoning of pets.

6. Agricultural Burns

- A. Helps maintain agricultural burning as a cultural management tool. Otherwise, burns may be prohibited or further regulated if dwellings are built too close to agricultural property.
- B. Protects the public's health and safety.

7. Beekeepers

- A. Helps preserve the use of bees for honey production and pollination. Otherwise, beekeepers may be forced to move hive sets out of agricultural areas due to close proximity to urban areas.
- B. Protects the public's health and safety from bees searching for food and water.

8. Erosion and Development

- A. Reduces the sources of soil erosion in agricultural areas.
- B. Reduces impacts on agriculture from flooding and siltation.

9. Other sources of land use conflict unique to certain situations.

Referral Process

1. The Agricultural Commissioner's office responds to referrals sent by the Environmental Coordinator's Office, Planning Department, or city government. Issues usually relate to proposed development, land divisions, zoning or general plan changes adjacent to or in the vicinity of existing agricultural land use. Responses are in writing and advisory only.
2. An on-site evaluation is conducted usually with the applicant and/or agent. Nearby agricultural operators are contacted whenever possible.
3. Existing agricultural use, within an appropriate range, is evaluated for potential significant land use conflict with the proposal. Realistic future agricultural uses on agricultural zoned parcels may also be considered.
4. Buffer determinations and other mitigation measures are made on a case by case basis considering all relevant factors. County wide standard or minimum setback distances are not used. However, this procedural guideline is followed to provide for maximum consistency.
5. Recommended mitigation measures are subject to review and modification by our staff as long as the margin of safety is maintained, potential nuisance issues are adequately addressed and potential land use conflict is maintained at a level below significance.
6. Agricultural Commissioner land use reports will also identify potential land use conflicts and negative impacts to agriculture in situations which may be partially or not at all mitigated. Even with buffer setbacks, etc., agriculturalists may be further restricted in their production practices or experience losses due to adjacent development.
7. Agricultural Commissioner's staff is available for testimony at public hearings upon the request of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Department, Environmental Coordinator, or city government.

Procedural Guidelines

Introduction

Type and extent of agricultural use, zoning, site specific non-crop factors, and the nature of the land use proposal are the most significant factors in a determination of significant land use conflict and subsequent mitigation measures.

1. Agricultural Use

- A. Extent: An evaluation is made if existing agricultural use is of a "production agriculture" scope. This differentiates "hobby farms", "ranchettes", or other smaller non-commercial type agricultural uses.
- B. Type: Farming practices vary considerably by type of agricultural use. Subsequently, land use conflict determinations and recommended mitigation measures are often directly related to the type of agricultural use potentially impacted by the referred land use proposal.
- C. Historical/Current/Future: An evaluation may be made concerning the suitability of a particular parcel or area for certain types of agricultural uses.

2. Zoning

Zoning on agricultural use parcels adjacent/near the referred land use proposal are evaluated. The zoning of the referred parcels and the overall zoning of the area may also be evaluated.

- A. Parcels adjacent to the referral project, zoned agriculture, with an existing or realistic future agricultural use normally provides a basis for a land use conflict determination and subsequent mitigation measures.
- B. Parcels adjacent to the referral project zoned for development (anything other than agriculture or open space) may provide a basis for a land use conflict determination only if a "production agriculture" use exists at the time of evaluation.

3. Site Specific Non-Crop Factors

Various site specific factors are evaluated and potentially utilized in land use conflict determinations and mitigation measures. These include, but are not limited to: topography, prevailing wind direction, natural screening (e.g.; vegetation, stream channels), soil type, and the extent of existing development.

4. Nature of the Proposal

Specific factors related to the referred land use proposal that may be significant include, but are not limited to: parcel size, configuration, density of development, and intended type of land use.

Mitigation Measures

Objective

Building setbacks (buffers) and/or screening techniques (walls, landscaping, etc.), are useful to increase the likelihood of compatibility between development (homes, schools, etc.) and agricultural property. Buffers are the most effective mitigation measure.

Scope

Building setbacks specify distance between agricultural property and future building sites. The buffer will allow for such land uses as landscaping, barns, storage buildings, orchards, pastures, etc., while protecting the agricultural use and the public's health and safety.

The County does not have the authority to restrict the agricultural land use in order to accomplish the recommended buffer. However, the Agricultural Commissioner does have the authority, and has at times, imposed spray buffers and other restrictions to pest management practices due to development or other potential hazards near agricultural operations.

Agricultural Buffer Distance Determinations

1. General Guidelines

- A. Determinations are made based on all relevant site and project criteria, practical knowledge of agricultural practices, technical literature, contact with other professionals within the University, industry, government agencies and training.
- B. "Margin of safety" and "probability" concepts are used in determining setback distances.
- C. The department's land use reports will identify recommended mitigation measures and will not provide alternatives.
- D. Existing dwellings adjacent to agricultural use may already negatively impact agriculture. Buffer mitigations deal with reducing future or additional impacts and aren't necessarily affected by existing dwellings unless the extent of existing development is such that the proposal does not significantly worsen the land use conflict already present.

2. Buffer Distance Ranges by Crop

Agricultural practices associated with the production of crops are the most important contributing factor to land use conflict when development occurs in close proximity to agricultural areas. Since production practices vary

considerably by type of crop, buffer distances may vary accordingly. Ranges in distance are necessary due to the influence that site or project specific factors may have.

Buffer Distance Range by Crop

<u>Type of Agricultural Use</u>	<u>Buffer Distance Range</u>
Vineyard	400 - 800 feet
Irrigated orchards	300 - 800 feet
Irrigated vegetables and berries	200 - 500 feet
Field Crops	100 - 400 feet
Dry farm almonds	100 - 200 feet
Rangeland/pasture	50 - 200 feet
Wholesale nurseries	100 - 500 feet
Animal Husbandry	See L.U.E.

Site specific non-crop factors and proposal specifications often affect the final buffer distance recommendation within the above range. Other mitigation measures such as screening, may also affect buffer distance recommendations. Significant overriding factors could justify buffers outside the indicated range.

3. Buffers and Development Potential

Potential development entitlement on the referred land use proposal will always be considered. However, with certain types of production agricultural crop uses on agricultural zoned land, the analysis may lead to a recommendation to: deny a portion or all of a proposal; redesign the project to mitigate impacts; or project phasing.

4. Zoning and Buffers

A. Effect of Agricultural Use Zoning on Project Mitigation.

The zoning on agricultural use parcels adjacent to the proposed land use referral may affect buffer determinations.

The following table applies to the zoning of parcels potentially affected by proposed projects. These parcels usually adjoin the proposed project, but may also encompass other parcels in the nearby area (regional considerations).

ZONING AND BUFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Adjacent Parcel</u>		<u>Project Parcel Mitigation</u>	
<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Ag Use</u>	<u>Buffers May Be Recommended</u>	<u>Development Entitlement Possibly Effectuated</u>
Ag. Zone	Production Ag. Use	Yes	Yes
Ag. Zone	Prime Soils	Yes	Yes
Ag. Zone	Realistic Future Ag. Use	Yes	No
Non-Ag. Zone	Production Ag. Use	Yes	*Yes
Non-Ag. Zone	Non-Production Ag. Use	No	No
Non-Ag. Zone	Realistic Future Prod. Ag. Use	No	No

*Production agricultural use parcels in non-agricultural zones which have historic agricultural value, prime soils, or other unique agricultural characteristics, will receive the same level of recommended mitigation protection as do agricultural zoned parcels.

For other production ag use parcels in non-agricultural zones, preferred buffer distances may need to be reduced to allow for potential development entitlement. Factors which then are evaluated to reduce the buffer are: the smallest parcel size entitled by the zoning on the subject property; locating a reasonable building site; or reconfiguration.

B. Use of Project Mitigation on Agriculturally Zoned Parcels

Buffers will only be recommended on parcels zoned agriculture which are under 20 acres in size (substandard sized lots commonly known as antiquated subdivisions). Maximum appropriate buffer distance within approved ranges will be recommended, but distances may need to be reduced to allow for reasonable home sites on existing parcels.

Specific Situational Issues

1. When buffers are recommended for proposed land use projects adjacent to production agriculture on non-agriculturally zoned property, the report will normally state: "In the event farming on the adjacent agricultural land use is discontinued in the future, the potential for significant land use conflict may cease and the mitigation measures may not be necessary."
2. Concerning screening, the department will not recommend the specific type of plant material or construction material for a wall or fence, but may state objectives and evaluate the applicants written proposal.
3. Organic farming practices will not typically influence mitigation measures.
4. Proposed industrial land uses adjacent to agricultural areas may also present significant land use conflict. Specific types of industrial use will be evaluated on a case by case basis through the normal referral process.
5. Land use conflict may be significantly reduced if the agricultural use and the proposed use is owned/operated by the same party (eg: Winery or a roadside stand added to an existing agricultural operation.)
6. Home sites that already exist within a "buffer zone" are not effected by the buffer restrictions. Buffers will only effect location of new home sites. Mobile homes are considered home sites and subsequently can be replaced by permanent home construction within the buffer zone. Permanent home replacement (e.g., fire destruction) would also be unaffected by the buffer.

APPENDIX E: RIGHT-TO-FARM ORDINANCE

The following right to farm ordinance is contained in chapter 5.16 of the San Luis Obispo County Code.

CHAPTER 5.16

AGRICULTURAL LANDS, OPERATIONS, AND THE RIGHT TO FARM ORDINANCE

- 5.16.010. Definitions
- 5.16.020. Findings and Policy
- 5.16.030. Pre-existing Agricultural Uses not a Nuisance
- 5.16.040. Disclosure
- 5.16.050. Property Tax Bill Disclosure
- 5.16.060. Disclosure Upon Transfer of Residential Property
- 5.17.070. Discretionary Land Use Permit Disclosure
- 5.16.080. Penalty for Violation
- 5.16.090. Resolution of Disputes
- 5.16.100. Severability

5.16.010. Definitions.

- (a) "Agricultural Land" shall mean all real property within the unincorporated boundaries of San Luis Obispo County currently used for Agricultural Operations, or upon which Agricultural Operations may in the future be established.
- (b) The term "agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof" (herein collectively referred to as "Agricultural Operations") shall include, but not be limited to, the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural commodity including timber, viticulture, apiculture, or horticulture, the raising of livestock, fur bearing animals, fish, or poultry, and any practices performed by a farmer or on a farm as incident to or in conjunction with those farming operations, including preparation for market, delivery to storage or to market, or delivery to carriers for transportation to market.
- (c) The term "nuisance" shall have the meaning ascribed to that term in California Civil Code Section 3479. California Civil Code Section 3479 reads, in part, as follows: "Anything which is injurious to health, or is indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property is a nuisance."

5.16.020. Findings and Policy:

- (a) It is the declared policy of this County to enhance and encourage Agricultural Operations within the County. It is the further intent of this County to provide to the residents of this County proper notification of the County's recognition and support through this ordinance of those persons and/or entities right to farm.
- (b) Where non-agricultural land uses occur near agricultural areas, Agricultural Operations frequently become the subjects of nuisance complaints due to lack of information about such operations. As a result, agricultural operators may be forced to cease or curtail their operations. Such actions discourage investments in farm improvements to the detriment of agricultural uses and the viability of the County's agricultural industry as a whole. It is the purpose and intent of this ordinance to reduce the loss to the County of its agricultural resources by clarifying the circumstances under which Agricultural Operations may be considered a nuisance. This ordinance is not to be construed as in any way modifying or abridging state law as set out in the California Civil Code, Health and Safety Code, Fish and Game Code, Food and Agricultural Code, Division 7 of the Water Code, or any other applicable provision of State law relative to nuisances. Instead, it is to be utilized only in the interpretation and enforcement of the provisions of this code and County regulations.
- (c) An additional purpose of this ordinance is to promote a good neighbor policy by advising purchasers of residential property, and owners of other property in the County, of the inherent potential problems associated with the purchase of such property. Such concerns may include, but are not limited to, the noises, odors, dust, chemicals, smoke and hours of operation that may accompany Agricultural Operations. It is intended that, through mandatory disclosures, purchasers and users will better understand the impact of living near Agricultural Operations and be prepared to accept attendant conditions as the natural result of living in or near rural areas.

5.16.030. Pre-existing Agricultural Uses Not a Nuisance:

- (a) No agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof, conducted or maintained for commercial purposes, and in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, as established and followed by similar Agricultural Operations in the same locality, shall be or become a nuisance, private or public, due to any changed condition in or about the locality, after it has been in operation for more than three years if it was not a nuisance at the time it began.
- (b) Subsection (a) of section 15.16.030 shall not apply if the agricultural activity, operation, or facility, or appurtenances thereof, obstruct the free passage or use, in the customary manner, of any navigable lake, river, bay, stream, canal, or basin, or any public park, square, street, or highway.

5.16.040. Disclosure

- (a) San Luis Obispo County has determined that the use of real property for Agricultural Operations is a high priority and favored use to the County, and those inconveniences or discomforts arising from legally established agricultural activities or operations, as defined in the San Luis Obispo County Code, or State law, shall not be or become a nuisance.
- (b) Disclosure Statement: "The County of San Luis Obispo declares it a policy to protect and encourage Agricultural Operations as defined in Chapter 5.16 of the San Luis Obispo County Code. If your property is located in the unincorporated area of the County, near an Agricultural Operation, you may at sometimes be subject to inconvenience or discomfort arising from Agricultural Operations. If conducted in a manner consistent with State law and County Code, said inconveniences and discomforts shall not be or become a nuisance."
- (c) The Disclosure Statement is given for informational purposes only and nothing in this Ordinance, or in the Disclosure Statement, shall prevent anyone from complaining to any appropriate agency, or taking any other available remedy, concerning any unlawful or improper agricultural practice.
- (d) The Disclosure Statement set forth above shall be used as described in sections 5.16.050, 5.16.060, and 5.16.070.

5.16.050. Property Tax Bill Disclosure

- (1) The County of San Luis Obispo may mail a copy of the disclosure set out at 5.16.040 (b) to all owners of real property in San Luis Obispo County with the annual tax bill.

5.16.060. Disclosure Upon Transfer of Residential Property

- (1) Upon any transfer of real property located in the unincorporated area of the County by sale, exchange, installment land sale contract (as defined in Civil Code Section 2985), lease with an option to purchase, any other option to purchase, or ground lease coupled with improvements, or residential stock cooperative, improved with or consisting of not less than one nor more than four dwelling units, the transferor shall deliver to the prospective transferee the written Disclosure Statement required by this ordinance. The Disclosure Statement shall be delivered in the manner set forth in Civil Code Sections 1102.2 and 1102.10. Exceptions to the applicability of this Section 5.16.060 are set forth in Civil Code Section 1102.1. The written disclosure shall be set forth in, and shall be made on a copy of, the following disclosure form:

LOCAL OPTION
REAL ESTATE TRANSFER
DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

THIS DISCLOSURE STATEMENT CONCERNS THE REAL PROPERTY SITUATED IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA OF THE COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DESCRIBED AS _____. THIS STATEMENT IS A DISCLOSURE OF THE CONDITION OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PROPERTY IN COMPLIANCE WITH CHAPTER 5.16 OF THE SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY CODE AS OF _____, 19 ____.

IT IS NOT A WARRANTY OF ANY KIND BY THE SELLER(S) OR ANY AGENT(S) REPRESENTING ANY PRINCIPAL(S) IN THIS TRANSACTION, AND IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY INSPECTIONS OR WARRANTIES THE PRINCIPAL(S) MAY WISH TO OBTAIN.

I
SELLERS INFORMATION

The Seller discloses the following information with the knowledge that even though this is not a warranty, prospective Buyers may rely on this information in deciding whether and on what terms to purchase the subject property. Seller hereby authorizes any agent(s) representing any principal(s) in this transaction to provide a copy of this statement to any person or entity in connection with any actual or anticipated sale of the property.

THE FOLLOWING ARE REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY THE SELLER(S) AS REQUIRED BY THE COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO, AND ARE NOT THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AGENTS(S), IF ANY. THIS INFORMATION IS A DISCLOSURE AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE PART OF ANY CONTRACT BETWEEN THE BUYER AND SELLER.

"The County of San Luis Obispo declares it a policy to protect and encourage Agricultural Operations as defined in Chapter 5.16 of the San Luis Obispo County Code. If your property is located in the unincorporated area of the County, near an Agricultural Operation, you may at sometimes be subject to inconvenience or discomfort arising from Agricultural Operations. If conducted in a manner consistent with State law and County Code, said inconveniences and discomforts shall not be or become a nuisance."

Seller certifies that the information herein is true and correct to the best of the Seller's knowledge as of the date signed by the Seller.

Seller _____ Date _____
Seller _____ Date _____

II

BUYER(S) AND SELLER(S) MAY WISH TO OBTAIN PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND/OR INSPECTIONS OF THE PROPERTY AND TO PROVIDE FOR APPROPRIATE PROVISIONS IN A CONTRACT BETWEEN BUYER AND SELLER(S) WITH RESPECT TO ANY ADVICE/ INSPECTIONS/DEFECTS.

I/WE ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF A COPY OF THIS STATEMENT.

Seller _____ Date _____ Buyer _____ Date _____
Seller _____ Date _____ Buyer _____ Date _____

Agent (Broker
Representing Seller) _____ By _____
(Associate Licensee
or
Broker-Signature)

Date _____
Agent (Broker
obtaining the Offer) _____ By _____
(Associate Licensee
or
Broker-Signature)

Date _____

A REAL ESTATE BROKER IS QUALIFIED TO ADVISE ON REAL ESTATE. IF YOU DESIRE LEGAL ADVICE, CONSULT YOUR ATTORNEY.

5.16.070 Discretionary Land Use Permit Disclosure

The County of San Luis Obispo shall include the Disclosure Statement described in Section 5.16.040(b) above on all discretionary land use permit applications administered by the County Department of Planning and Building. These shall include, but not be limited to, applications for the approval of land divisions pursuant to Title 21 of the San Luis Obispo County Code, applications for the approval of discretionary land use permits pursuant to Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code, and applications for the approval of discretionary land use permits pursuant to Title 23 of San Luis Obispo County Code.

5.16.080 Penalty for Violation

Any violation of any of the requirements of this chapter shall be handled as a civil matter between the parties affected and shall not be a misdemeanor or infraction.

5.16.090. Resolution of Disputes.

Should any controversy arise regarding any inconvenience or discomfort occasioned by Agricultural Operations (described in Section 15.16.010 (b) above) conducted in accordance with existing laws, ordinances and regulations, then the parties may notify the County Agricultural Commissioner as set forth below in an attempt to resolve the matter:

- (a) The aggrieved party may notify the Agricultural Commissioner within 30 days of the occurrence of the Agricultural Operation giving rise to the controversy.
- (b) Within 15 days after receiving the complaint, the Agricultural Commissioner shall set a meeting with the affected parties and shall attempt to mediate the dispute.
- (c) If the dispute cannot be successfully mediated by the Agricultural Commissioner, then both parties may agree to present the controversy to a professional mediator. The expense of such mediation shall be the responsibility of the effected parties.

5.16.100 Severability

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity or the constitutionality of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

APPENDIX F: AGRICULTURE: LAND, ECONOMY, INDUSTRY

Physical Resource Base

San Luis Obispo County has diverse physical features that affect use of land for agriculture. Physical characteristics, including topography, soils, climate, natural vegetation and water, are strongly interrelated.

Several mountain ranges and intervening valleys transect the county. Geology and topography are key factors in the formation of soils and the use of land for cropland or grazing. The usability of soils for crops depends on their depth, drainage, texture and water- holding capacity. The best soils for crops normally occur on flat or gently sloping lowlands. Soil erosion is generally a problem on moderate to steep slopes. More than 50 percent of the county has slopes exceeding 30 percent, which generally can be used only for grazing.

The climate of the coastal area west of the Santa Lucia Range is very different from that of the interior. Coastal temperatures are moderated throughout the year by humid marine air, including much foggy weather during the spring and summer. The nearly frost-free climate allows year-round production of vegetables (typically, 2 to 3 crops per year) in coastal valleys and citrus, avocados and other subtropical fruits in the foothills. In contrast, the interior of the county has hot summers and cold winters. Such conditions favor production of deciduous fruits and nuts, dry farm grain, alfalfa, and single cropping of vegetables.

The mountain ranges transecting the county create successive rain shadows to the east. The crest of the northerly Santa Lucia Range receives an average annual rainfall of 30 to 50 inches while the Carrizo Plain averages only six to eight inches. The amount of rainfall strongly influences yields of dry farm grain and hay and the growth of range grasses in different areas of the county. Most grain and hay is produced in areas of moderate rainfall such as the north-central part of the county. Open hillsides on the northerly Santa Lucia Range are the best grazing lands in the county, while dry areas and tree and brush-covered areas are the poorest. Moderate to densely-wooded areas primarily occur on the northeasterly slopes of the Santa Lucia Range and the crests and sides of other mountain ranges. Chaparral predominates on dry, southwesterly facing mountain slopes and on the poor granitic soils of the Las Pilitas area.

Irrigated agriculture is dependent on the quantity, quality and depth of groundwater. The most extensive and abundant source of groundwater is the Paso Robles Basin, underlying the northeastern quadrant of the county. The Carrizo Plain Basin is the next largest area, but water quantity and quality is poor. Expansion of irrigated uses in the Cuyama Basin is questionable since the basin is experiencing overdraft and water quality may be deteriorating. The Santa Maria Basin is the largest of the coastal basins; this and other coastal valley basins provide water for row crops and other irrigated crops. Areas of limited groundwater, mostly in the hills on

both sides of the Santa Lucia Range used for irrigated orchards and vineyards, must depend on low-production wells and drip irrigation systems to conserve water. The increasing consumption of water by urban, rural residential and agricultural uses is a major issue confronting the future use of groundwater in the county.

Sectors of the Agricultural Economy

Cropland and grazing lands involve approximately 1,370,000 acres¹ or 65 percent of the total county area (2,122,240 acres) and account for approximately 80 percent of privately-owned lands in the county. The quality of land varies widely from prime valleys used for intensive vegetable production to arid, mountainous, or tree or chaparral-covered areas limited to grazing and having a very low livestock carrying capacity. The latter areas commonly occur on large cattle ranches with land varying from well-suited to poorly-suited or unusable for grazing.

Table F-1 shows the harvested acreage of various crops, acreage in rangeland, and numbers of farm animals from 1973 through 1992. The total harvested acreage in any given year is less than the actual production acreage because of such factors as adverse weather conditions that reduce the harvested acreage, crop/fallow rotation, and the Conservation Reserve Program, a federal subsidy program in which participating landowners leave the land idle for ten years to help restore the soils. Total agricultural acreage appears has declined slightly during the past 20 years, although it is difficult to determine how much from the table.

The table reflects the physical limitations as well as the agricultural diversity of the county. The total harvested cropland acreage in 1992 was 12 percent of the combined total of cropland and grazing land, and irrigated cropland accounted for 44 percent of the total irrigated and dry farm acreage or about five percent of the combined total for cropland and grazing uses.

Most vegetable production occurs in the coastal valleys, notably the Oso Flaco and Arroyo Grande Valleys. Lettuce and cole crops are the major crops. Irrigated field crops, mostly alfalfa and irrigated pasture, predominate in the interior valleys. The high cost of pumping water is resulting in gradual conversion to higher value crops such as vegetables and wine grapes.

¹ Includes land in the Conservation Reserve Program

TABLE F-1: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (HARVESTED ACRES, NUMBERS OF ANIMALS) IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, 1973-1992

CROP ASSOCIATION & TYPE ¹	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
IRRIGATED CROPS																				
Vegetable Crops²																				
Bell Peppers	414	409	425	539	593	605	682	462	584	444	536	599	499	585	1,020	1,134	812	717	1,000	995
Broccoli	3,545	4,737	4,397	3,825	5,270	5,481	5,304	3,909	4,197	5,153	4,315	4,313	4,176	5,510	6,658	6,607	7,363	5,575	6,950	9,952
Cabbage	123	136	96	239	392	632	539	1,019	1,094	770	857	577	526	468	457	563	716	991	1,340	1,457
Carrots	418	619	700	944	240	389	2,236	*	*	897	1,270	1,370	1,422	2,218	3,209	2,813	3,480	3,486	4,244	3,531
Cauliflower	369	927	680	761	645	962	882	625	615	588	1,009	1,234	1,690	2,643	2,547	2,261	1,923	1,854	2,202	2,358
Celery	1,372	1,292	1,399	1,402	1,139	1,547	1,332	1,269	1,267	1,359	638	1,053	890	767	796	1,053	1,156	1,113	1,313	981
Oriental Vegetables	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	647	795	812	756	735	724	868	1,261	1,378	1,215	1,399	1,120
Lettuce	5,409	4,346	6,662	6,360	6,972	10,508	9,775	9,302	9,370	9,615	10,937	10,795	10,017	9,097	8,816	9,349	9,705	10,894	10,112	9,451
Peas (edible pod)	578	655	910	808	891	1,228	1,045	950	1,600	2,620	3,730	4,680	3,344	4,500	4,050	3,750	4,260	3,500	2,200	1,650
Miscellaneous	3,108	2,038	1,976	1,595	1,767	2,639	2,766	2,353	2,583	2,077	2,030	2,119	1,960	2,309	2,030	2,312	2,418	2,285	2,445	1,936
Total Vegetable Crops	15,336	15,159	17,245	16,473	17,909	23,991	24,561	19,889	21,957	24,318	26,134	27,496	25,259	28,821	30,451	31,103	33,211	31,630	33,205	33,431
Field Crops																				
Alfalfa Hay	12,600	13,700	14,100	14,900	6,679	8,875	9,762	12,123	11,780	10,619	9,619	9,345	7,245	6,775	5,263	5,100	5,000	4,200	3,480	3,480
Irrigated Pasture	3,600	3,600	3,500	3,100	3,300	5,700	6,000	6,000	5,800	5,500	5,500	5,750	5,900	5,800	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,600
Sugar Beets	983	1,473	1,483	1,791	982	570	870	1,599	1,547	428	595	761	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Total Field Crops	17,183	18,773	19,083	19,791	10,961	15,145	16,632	19,722	19,127	16,547	15,714	15,856	13,145	12,575	10,863	10,700	10,600	9,800	9,080	9,080
Fruit Crops																				
Avocados	*	180	153	396	320	408	733	737	833	843	1,523	1,523	1,340	1,340	1,300	1,299	1,320	1,220	1,165	1,165
Grapes (wine)	578	675	1,219	2,962	3,200	3,405	3,857	3,957	4,374	4,500	4,977	5,477	5,480	6,084	6,459	7,255	7,649	8,150	8,100	8,327
Miscellaneous	1,011	903	1,091	1,106	1,208	1,389	1,314	1,469	1,488	1,538	1,686	1,843	1,919	1,966	2,202	2,252	2,297	2,581	2,695	3,189
Total Fruit Crops	1,589	1,758	2,463	4,464	4,728	5,202	5,904	6,163	6,695	6,881	8,186	8,843	8,739	9,390	9,961	10,806	11,266	11,951	11,960	12,681
Seed & Nursery Stock	854	1,383	1,313	1,030	930	116	706	1,179	378	582	221	2,672	3,917	3,249	2,020	3,102	2,107	2,225	2,228	2,752
TOTAL IRRIGATED CROPS	34,962	37,073	40,104	41,758	34,528	44,454	47,803	46,953	48,157	48,328	50,255	54,867	51,060	54,035	53,295	55,711	57,184	55,606	56,473	57,944
NON-IRRIGATED CROPS																				
Nut Crops³																				
Almonds	6,050	6,800	2,040	2,796	4,450	4,730	6,394	6,184	6,154	6,079	5,979	5,979	5,949	5,000	4,911	4,782	4,299	3,299	2,799	2,400
Walnuts	2,765	2,540	2,430	2,623	1,366	1,136	2,727	2,853	2,853	2,853	2,775	2,975	3,054	3,054	2,962	2,962	3,073	2,970	2,770	2,890
Total Nut Crops	8,815	9,340	4,470	5,419	5,816	5,866	9,121	9,037	9,007	8,932	8,754	8,954	9,003	8,054	7,873	7,744	7,372	6,269	5,569	5,290
Field Crops																				
Barley	57,000	54,000	56,000	69,000	65,988	87,000	80,000	82,000	90,000	94,800	96,400	98,700	90,000	83,000	65,000	62,500	45,00	35,000	28,000	30,000
Garbanzos	4,392	5,811	6,236	5,894	2,498	3,485	3,834	3,842	3,600	3,401	2,403	1,100	750	2,500	1,515	715	525	*	*	1,070
Grain Hay	61,000	57,000	55,000	48,000	7,000	7,538	7,100	13,500	12,000	14,000	15,000	19,000	35,000	41,000	36,000	32,000	35,00	32,500	30,000	24,000
Safflower	*	2,530	10,000	580	*	3,228	4,933	4,161	4,291	2,500	3,615	1,665	2,165	4,225	2,722	2,500	1,500	750	1,600	6,140
Wheat	61,200	66,300	68,000	54,000	32,650	43,000	43,000	66,000	68,000	55,000	27,500	22,000	30,000	32,000	25,000	25,000	12,000	5,025	3,865	6,044
Miscellaneous ⁴	2,551	2,822	2,833	2,654	1,686	4,533	4,415	1,810	1,800	1,820	3,700	3,861	3,800	3,730	2,795	1,500	1,200	1,245	1,600	800
Total Field Crops	186,143	188,463	198,069	180,128	109,822	148,784	143,282	171,313	179,691	171,521	148,618	146,326	161,715	166,455	133,032	124,215	23,225	74,520	65,065	68,054
TOTAL NON-IRRIGATED CROPS	194,958	197,803	202,539	185,547	115,638	154,650	152,403	180,350	188,698	180,453	157,372	155,280	170,718	174,509	140,905	131,959	30,597	80,789	70,634	73,344
TOTAL ALL CROPS	229,920	234,876	242,643	227,305	150,166	199,104	200,206	227,303	236,855	228,781	207,627	210,147	221,778	228,544	194,200	187,670	87,781	136,395	127,107	131,288
Grazing Land⁵																				
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1,083,842	1,083,842	1,084,000	1,075,000	1,070,000	1,065,000	1,060,000	1,015,000	1,040,000	1,000,000
Livestock & Poultry (# of Animals)																				
Cattle & Calves	91,000	83,600	93,100	96,700	111,814	104,000	97,947	72,000	94,000	96,350	92,000	87,000	85,000	80,000	75,000	67,500	62,500	60,000	56,000	50,000
Hogs	6,860	7,140	6,600	8,731	3,500	8,500	8,750	8,000	7,700	7,500	5,050	6,292	4,275	4,900	3,937	3,654	4,102	4,313	4,019	4,845
Horses	508	347	321	274	310	290	275	295	700	1,250	1,350	1,845	2,300	2,200	3,000	3,000	*	*	*	*
Poultry (meat)	645,000	565,000	597,000	581,000	388,459	356,800	308,824	465,323	414,796	416,954	401,647	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Sheep & Lambs	10,200	10,800	11,100	13,300	7,200	4,800	6,200	11,000	12,600	11,400	10,000	8,750	8,560	7,213	12,345	10,711	7,391	7,807	7,141	7,086

NOTES: 1. Individual crops involving 1,000 acres or more.
2. Includes double or multiple cropping on same acreage.
3. Most acreage is non-irrigated.
4. Includes some irrigated field crops.
5. Grain stubble use for grazing not included since it is a secondary use.

Source: San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner's Annual Reports * Not tabulated or included in Miscellaneous

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The expansion of vineyards has been a major change in agricultural patterns. Harvested acreage increased from 578 acres in 1973 to 8,327 acres in 1992. Most of this acreage was previously used for dry farm grain production. Vineyards occur mostly on gently rolling land east of Paso Robles, west of Templeton and Paso Robles, and in the Edna Valley. Avocados, lemons and some other subtropical fruits are grown in the coastal foothills.

Production of nursery stock and crop seed has steadily increased. Higher value activities include propagation of fruit and nut trees and vegetable seedlings, and the production of cut flowers, indoor decorative and ornamental trees and shrubs. These represent new markets for agriculture as the county population expands.

Most almond and walnut orchards in the county are dry farmed. They occur in areas where the average annual rainfall exceeds 12 inches, notably the east slopes and foothills of the northerly Santa Lucia Range and between Atascadero and Creston. Production acreage is anticipated to decrease because of competition with extensive irrigated orchards in California's Central Valley. Local dry farm production is subject to weather conditions that cause large fluctuations in harvests, and most orchards are located on small parcels whose owners may or may not maintain the orchards. Many of these lands are now being pressured for conversion to rural residential homesites.

Most dry farm grain and hay is produced in the interior valleys and uplands in the northern and eastern parts of the county, including the rural areas between and surrounding Paso Robles, Templeton, Creston, Shandon and the northerly Carrizo Plain. Major crops are barley, grain hay and wheat. Grain and grain hay are also produced in the coastal valleys. It is anticipated that there will be continuing conversion of dry farm lands to vineyards and orchards where sufficient groundwater is available for irrigation. The actual acreage of land used for dry farm grain and hay is larger than indicated in Table F-1 because of crop/fallow rotation. In addition, a substantial acreage is idle because it is in the Conservation Reserve Program.

Rangelands for livestock grazing occur countywide. The best grazing land is on the open coastal slopes of the Santa Lucia Range in the North Coast area. Raising cattle and calves is the principal livestock operation. Approximately 75,000 acres of grain stubble land in the county is used as supplemental forage for livestock.

The raising of horses for work, pleasure, racing and show purposes contributes a significant portion of agricultural income in the county. The diversity of animal raising activities has also increased.

Table F-2 shows the value of major classes of agricultural commodities produced in the county from 1973 through 1992. The increase is substantial even when constant dollars are used to compensate for the declining value of the dollar for the purchase of goods and services. The value of agricultural production during the 20-year period was increased by the intensification of agriculture, including technological improvements in production, establishment of vineyards and orchards on land that was previously used for production of lower value field crops,

expansion of nurseries and greenhouses, and the raising of horses. Each of the five categories in Table F-2 significantly contributes to the county's agriculture economy.

The U.S. Census of Agriculture, one of the few sources of information for data related to farm operations and farm operators, has altered its definitions over the years, making long term comparisons of loss or gain in the number of farms or acreage difficult to evaluate. The Census defines a farm as any place of one acre or more from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year. According to the Census, the number of farms in San Luis Obispo County increased from 1,430 in 1978 to 1,991 in 1987. However, the average farm size decreased from 1,034 to 725 acres during the same period. The major change was the increase in number of farms in the 1 to 50 acre range, indicating the significant parcelization of agricultural lands that is occurring.

Of the 1,991 farms in 1987, 1,609 were owned by individuals or families, 277 were in partnerships and 89 were held by corporations, 76 of which were family-held corporations. By tenure of farm operators, 1,299 were full owners, 337 were part owners and 335 were tenants. About half, or 979 farm operators, considered their principal occupation to be other than farming; 923 of the operators reported 100 days or more of work off farms. The average age of county farmers in 1987 was 52.5 years, only slightly more than the state average.

**TABLE F-2: VALUE (GROSS DOLLARS) OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, 1973 - 1992¹**

YEAR	ANIMAL INDUSTRY	FIELD CROPS	FRUIT & NUT CROPS	VEGETABLE CROPS	SEED & NURSERY STOCK	TOTAL VALUATIONS
1973	33,200,700	15,881,000	3,853,600	27,983,800	753,600	81,672,700
1974	25,839,900	23,377,300	4,952,600	28,256,700	1,941,000	84,367,500
1975	27,830,300	24,830,300	3,906,400	31,214,100	3,052,000	90,833,100
1976	26,167,500	19,585,500	6,443,840	34,999,600	6,185,000	93,381,440
1977	28,405,800	12,457,200	7,284,000	41,400,600	3,151,000	92,698,600
1978	31,400,000	20,646,000	10,255,000	60,664,000	5,195,000	128,160,000
1979	47,242,600	25,026,000	22,875,000	47,700,000	7,006,000	147,849,600
1980	40,012,300	41,775,000	18,921,000	51,499,000	7,846,000	160,053,300
1981	41,945,500	36,842,000	18,109,000	84,789,000	8,982,000	190,667,500
1982	58,998,000	39,825,000	21,317,000	78,510,000	9,509,000	208,159,000
1983	60,383,000	45,091,000	18,933,000	97,139,000	7,871,000	229,407,000
1984	58,229,400	33,712,000	19,433,000	87,403,000	10,396,000	209,173,400
1985	59,326,600	28,244,600	23,191,500	90,268,000	14,673,400	215,704,100
1986	54,024,000	28,367,000	23,740,000	114,314,000	12,148,000	232,593,000
1987	59,770,000	24,323,000	27,126,000	118,449,000	18,143,000	247,811,000
1988	55,257,000	30,240,000	41,515,000	117,448,000	22,825,000	267,285,000
1989	30,883,000*	25,370,000	59,946,000	137,859,000	26,645,000	280,703,000*
1990	30,276,000*	17,666,000	53,541,000	135,349,000	35,657,000	272,489,000*
1991	26,440,000*	16,989,000	54,746,000	126,352,000	36,070,000	260,597,000*
1992	26,319,000*	18,575,000	56,308,000	136,232,000	37,749,000	275,183,000*

* Value of horses not included due to lack of data

¹ Source: San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner's Annual Reports. Figures represent best estimates.

The Agricultural Industry and Support Uses

There is a need to provide land for agricultural industry and support uses such as confined livestock and poultry raising, specialized production of food and plants in greenhouses and other structures, and processing and packing of agricultural products in industrial facilities. Associated with agricultural production and processing is a demand for a variety of supplies and services. Supplies include farm machinery and equipment, feed, nursery stock, pesticides, fertilizers, and fencing materials. Services include the maintenance and repair of machinery and equipment, professional services, manufacturing services, and waste handling and disposal. Institutional lenders play an important role in farm economics. The availability of credit, technical advisory services and agricultural services can affect the decision of farmers to remain in agriculture.

The agriculture service industry and support uses are generally best located in urban industrial or service commercial areas, but some uses are also appropriate in agricultural production areas for both the purposes of convenience and avoiding conflict with the public. Such uses and services are essential for agricultural producers, and in turn require a critical mass of agricultural activity to economically sustain their existence.

Most agricultural commodities produced in San Luis Obispo County are packed in the fields and trucked to processing centers or markets in metropolitan areas. Exceptions include the county's wineries and some vegetable processing and packing facilities in Oceano and the nearby Santa Maria and Guadalupe areas. Barley, the leading dry farm crop in the county, is mostly transported to the Central Valley where it is used as feed for dairy cows and other livestock. The use of railroad transportation has declined in recent years due to high rail freight rates and the more competitive cost of truck transportation. Existing railroad freight loading facilities and land zoned for industrial and service commercial uses are located in San Miguel, Paso Robles, Templeton, Atascadero, Santa Margarita, San Luis Obispo, Oceano, and Guadalupe.

Most agricultural commodities produced in the county are sold on the wholesale market and are processed and/or distributed to state and national markets. However, direct local marketing includes on-farm sales of hay and livestock; sales of produce to retail grocers and restaurants; and direct sales to consumers at farmers markets, roadside stands and wine tasting rooms. Direct marketing will become increasingly important because of the potential economic advantages to small-scale farmers of handling all aspects of operations from production through marketing as well as the benefits of increasing and enhancing tourism.

Economists generally agree that the gross value of agricultural production is multiplied through the local economy by a factor of two to three times through involvement by other sectors of the economy, including industry, retail trade and commercial services. At the same time, agriculture is not as growth-inducing as other economic sectors and requires substantially fewer county services than other industries, thus agriculture contributes a net financial surplus to the county.

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